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THE NEW REPUBLIC

SEPTEMBER 4, 1995 • $2.95

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by Jan Breslauer

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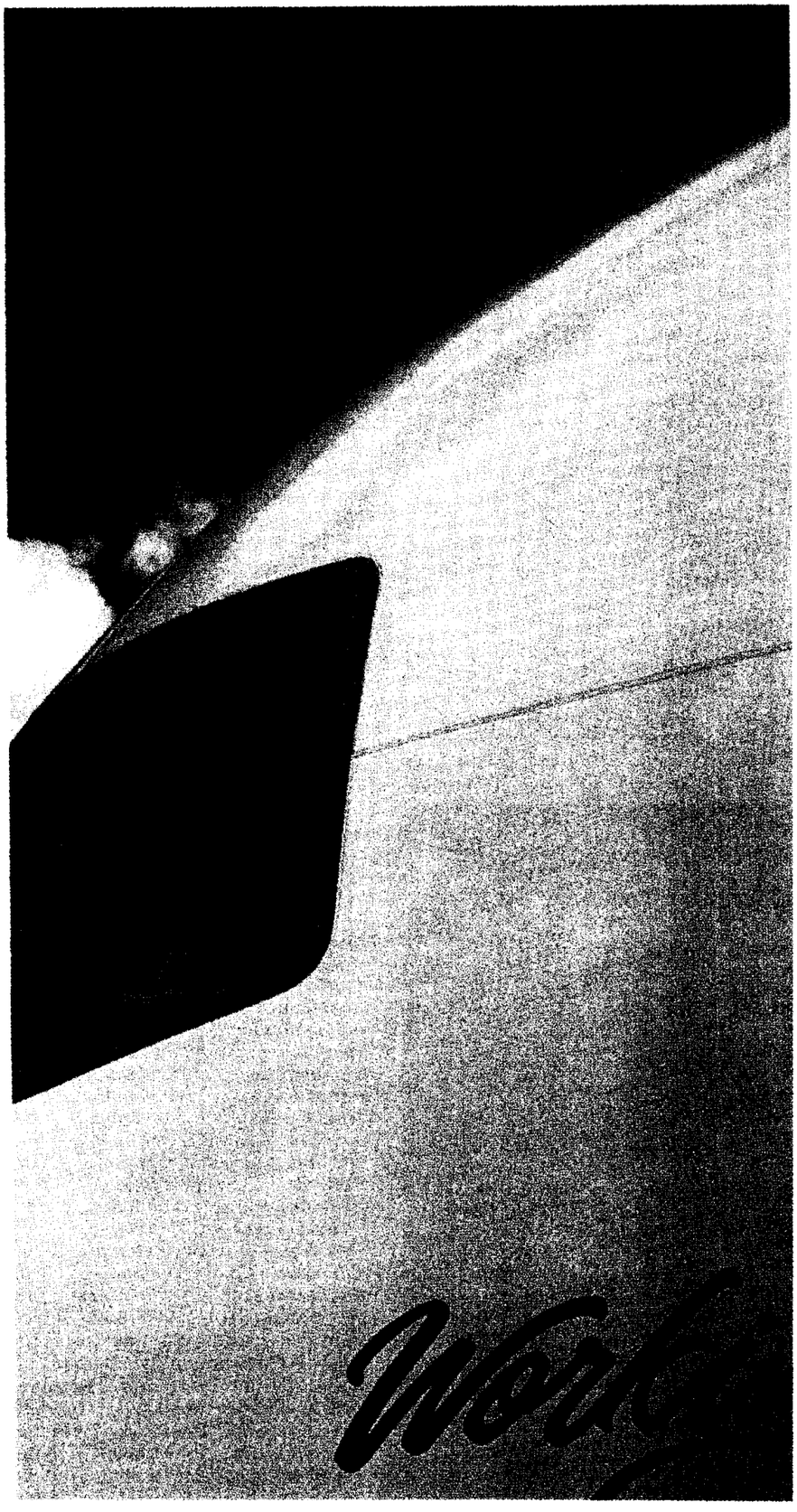

No one flies alone.

Here's a question our Director of Research and Engineering sometimes asks aspiring engineers: "When was the last time you received or gave help during a math test?" Most recoil because we're taught that "to help" is "to cheat." That's the whole point. The fact is, helping each other is central to our success. No one person, no matter how brilliant, can design a Space Station. Or this 777, our newest jetliner. The lesson in his question is this: Mastery of academic disciplines is just a start—the real-life assignment is all of us, working together.

BOEING

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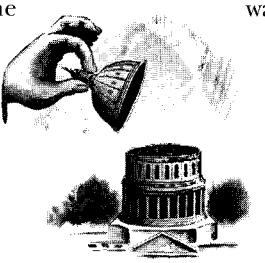
TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Off track

The annoying nerviness of House Republicans continues to show up in matters large and small. One matter that sounds small, but is in fact large, is now moving slowly, and with zero fanfare, through the House Ways and Means Committee. Ostensibly an obscure procedural issue ("fast-track re-authorization"), it actually represents a fundamental ideological choice about America's future connection to the world.

The "fast-track" procedure, you may recall, has long been a kind of straitjacket Congress places on itself—a way of fighting its tendency to decorate trade agreements with special-interest amendments. Under fast-track, Congress can either nod or shake its head in response to any trade pacts a president submits; it can't touch them. Votes on both NAFTA and the World Trade Organization came under fast-track rules, but the rules have now expired. This gives Republicans an opportunity to change them. Uh oh.

The proposed rules would prevent presidents from including labor and environmental accords in trade pacts under fast-track consideration. For example: suppose you're negotiating a free trade deal with Mexico that will spur manufacturing across the border and thus boost air pollution that then drifts northward into your lungs. Suppose you wisely include a provision compelling both nations to adhere to tight pollution standards in factories near the border. The Republican fast-track language would make this, practically speaking, undoable.



If you ask Republicans to justify this position, their first-line defense is that trade and environmental law are two distinct issues and shouldn't be mixed. But, obviously, they're inherently mixed; in the above example, a trade pact creates a transnational environmental problem that, one would think, the pact might therefore legitimately address. Besides, what would be wrong with using a trade agreement as a carrot to induce Mexico to clean up a *pre-existing* mess that affects Texans or Californians? Since pollution isn't offensive enough to warrant a military invasion, economic incentives are about the only levers at our disposal. And a new trade agreement offers a once-in-a-lifetime lever.

The fallback Republican defense of the proposed fast-track rules is that if you let liberal activists get their hands on a trade pact, they'll try to rewrite the laws of our trading partners wholesale, showing little discernment about when trade and environmental concerns are and aren't connected. For example, Chile, which wants to join NAFTA, doesn't share a border with us. So only a few of its environmental policies spill over into America—its treatment of migrational species, say, or deforestation (which worsens the greenhouse effect). Yet, Republicans note, environmentalists are already talking about how Chile needs to clean up its strip mines.

Well, let them talk. Remember, the fast-track process is expressly designed to keep zealous interest groups at bay. And so far it's done a pretty good job.

Moreover, on close examination, issues like strip mining usefully remind us that trade and environmental law are in fact linked in various non-obvious ways. When manufacturing costs in developing countries are kept low by lax environmental policy, conservatives are politically strengthened in arguing for relaxing our own environmental laws: we have to keep America competitive, they say. By exposing American manufacturing more directly to foreign competition, freer trade increases this downward political pressure on our environmental standards.

A similar dynamic applies to labor standards. A low minimum wage in Mexico ultimately exerts downward pressure on American wages.

This connection between trade on the one hand and environmental and labor standards on the other is inherent; the only question is whether trade agreements are structured mainly to exert downward pressure on the standards of developed countries or upward pressure on the standards of developing countries.

Now, obviously, if you go too far in the latter direction, the whole exercise becomes self-defeating. If you raise Mexican wages so high that Mexico can't produce anything more cheaply than the U.S., then you've negated the effect

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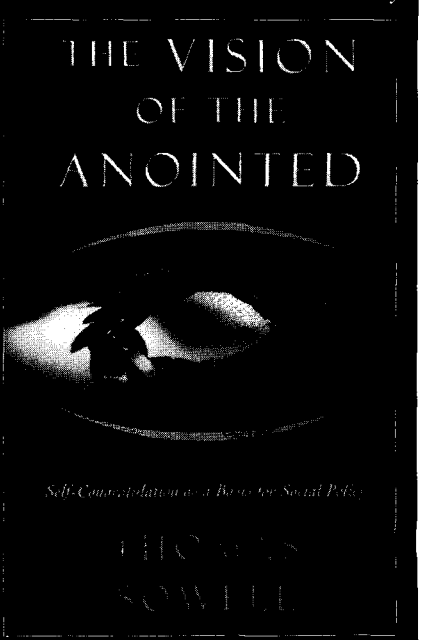
"A BROADSIDE against the RECEIVED WISDOM of America's ELITE LIBERAL INTELLIGENTSIA."

—Publishers Weekly

THOMAS SOWELL presents a devastating critique of the mindset behind the failed social policies of the past thirty years. He shows that these failures were a logical consequence of a "vision" that flatters some people's egos while it blights other people's lives.



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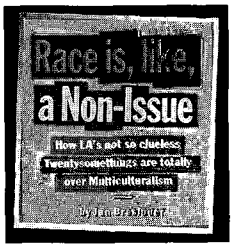

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CORRESPONDENCE

Original sin

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen claims that the Supreme Court's three major race decisions "reveal the conservative judicial project to be unprincipled at its core," because the five justices in the majority did not interpret the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause as its authors would have read it 127 years ago ("The Color-Blind Court," July 31).

This claim is doubly inaccurate. First, the Court's decision in *Jenkins* to curtail the remedial authority of federal judges in school desegregation cases hardly supports Rosen's thesis. As Rosen acknowledges, *Jenkins* embodies rather than repudiates judicial restraint.

Second, it is not necessarily unprincipled to base some decisions on precedent or moral principle while resting others on the original understanding of a constitutional provision. Unless a justice has made authorial intent his polestar for navigating *all* constitutional controversies—and, arguably, only Clarence Thomas has done that—he does not contradict himself in saying that the original understanding of a clause should guide the Court sometimes but not always. Indeed, this is Rosen's own view, not to mention the view of almost all sitting judges.

ERIC RAKOWSKI
Berkeley, California

Organ music

To the editors:

I found Robert Wright's July 31 TRB ("The Trouble With Harry") intriguing because of its sloppiness. Wright uses meticulous logic to argue that prisoner executions followed by their organ procurement is not such a bad thing. Fine. But then he strays from that pattern to make a point about our health care mess.

Mickey Mantle got a liver because he had been dry for more than a year, had the financial resources and was placed in one of the most emergent categories for transplant. The "penniless uninsured sap" with "alcohol on his breath" obviously has not been abstinent for the recommended time period. Also, his lack of funds is a problem, but usually sincere attempts are made to get funding. They may fail, but that was not Wright's point.

Sure, great iniquities do exist in our system, but if Wright is going to suggest that Mickey Mantle got his liver because of his stature, then he needs to give more details. I don't buy it.

TED M. BURNS
Charlottesville, Virginia

To the editors:

Robert Wright seems more interested in separating himself from Jesse Helms (whom I loathe, too) than discerning the truth about China. Wright seems driven in this regard to such an extent that he suggests that Harry Wu (now being championed by Helms) deserves what he gets, because he didn't "stumble innocently into the clutches of evil." Wright also suggests that the Chinese regime is not "evil, beyond the pale." This, after the slaughter in Tiananmen, after the annihilation of literally millions of Chinese over the past several decades. (In typical TNR fashion, Helms is described as "evil" in the same issue in the Notebook.) In the scheme of things, Helms—for all his considerable ignorance and bigotry and belligerence—does not represent the kind of immediate threat to life and liberty (the kind of evil) that China's system of government has enacted and continues to enact on a daily basis.

JOE CUOMO
Flushing, New York

Laughable

To the editors:

In your "Notebook" for July 31, you defend Senate Republican leader Bob Dole's "moderate" chief of staff, Sheila Burke, against attack by a coterie of right-wing columnists and pundits.

What are conservatives so upset about? If Burke is indeed a "moderate," it does not seem to have rubbed off much on her boss of late. After all, we are talking about Bob Dole, who as I write is trying to ram through the Senate a bill that, in the name of the current Republican shibboleth of "regulatory reform," would gut the nation's environmental and occupational safety laws. Bob Dole, a pawn of the NRA who, for a few pieces of political silver, would repeal the ban on assault weapons, under the oppressive thumb of a "moderate" assistant? The idea is laughable.

The furor over Sheila Burke seems to me a mark of how far U.S. politics (or those of TNR?) have lurched to the right.

JONATHAN P. BERKEY
Princeton, New Jersey

Cognophobes

To the editors:

Richard Rorty, in his review of Paul Feyerabend's autobiography ("Untruth and Consequences," July 31), maintains that those of us who still believe in the human capacity to acquire reliable knowledge of the natural world are violating Darwinian principles by ascribing unique, occult powers to the human mind. To this I, as a biologist, feel entitled to retort: *tu quoque*, Mr. Philosopher!

A moment's reflection should convince us that the brains of other animals have been endowed by natural selection with the capacity to form reasonably accurate models of the external world. After all, a lion that sees imaginary gazelles, but not real ones, is likely to dine seldomly. Rorty and his fellow cognophobes and relativists are really trying to convince us that humans are unique in having lost this faculty—a claim that is inconsistent with Darwinism, implausible and unsupported by any evidence.

I'd better stop; it would be unkind to go on and point out the contradiction involved in maintaining that there can be no privileged conceptual schemes, then defending this claim by employing Darwinism as ... well, you get the idea.

STEPHEN G. LABONNE
Albany, New York

To the editors:

Rorty's piece reviewing Paul Feyerabend's *Killing Time* is but another defense of irrationalism. If it were not for the low level of science literacy in the U.S., it could be ignored with a mere sigh.

Scientists defend their work not on the basis of "moral virtue" but on that of their track record of proven discoveries. Newton's prism split white light into its rainbow of colors; Galileo's telescope discovered the moons of Jupiter; and today's astronomers saw galaxies. The discovery of the code of DNA is one for all times, not just today.

The treatment of Darwin's evolutionary theory also missed a subtle point. True, evolutionary advance depends on chance (mutation), but it also depends on the winnowing force of selection (survival and reproduction). Although organisms do not evolve toward particular goals, they do come to more accurately track the "truths" of their environmental ecologies—whether that be in the design of a more light-sensitive eye or in that of a more sensitive detector of chemicals in the air or water. The ability of humans to find regularities of nature, then, may not be an accidental one.

It would be amusing to watch a philosopher of science wait for a Kuhnian revolution that will let him pour water into his car's gasoline tank, drain the air out of his car's tires and then drive off into the sunrise of a new scientific paradigm. But don't encourage him, as he just might try it.

DAVID C. ROWE
Tucson, Arizona

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Unnatural selection

To the editors:

As a scholar who has spent much of his life studying Emile Zola, I read Eugen Weber's review of Frederick Brown's *Zola: A Life* ("The Naturalist," July 31) with dismay. Why could you not have chosen a Zola specialist (and there are at least a dozen good ones in America alone) to do the job?

What Weber should have pointed out, but didn't, is that Brown's portrait of this truly great writer is terribly out-of-date and in several respects one-sided and misleading. Since about 1950, when the contemporary revival of critical interest in Zola began, a great deal of new light has been shed on both the man and his works. Old myths, some rooted in the excesses of Zola's own naturalist propaganda, others in the passions of the Dreyfus Affair, have been exploded. Not only Zola's realism, but also his artistic, scientific, poetic, philosophical, religious and prophetic sides have been re-evaluated in depth. Traditional academic conceptions of him, shaped by early nineteenth-century literary historians, have been radically revised, at least in the academic world.

Brown, a fantastically good storyteller and a dazzling stylist, could have used his great talents to introduce the new Zola to the general public. Instead, he has given it pretty much the same old Zola that it had known before—amplified, in better focus, but that is all. Long on fact, but short on truth, his book sadly fails to live up to the boast on its jacket that it contains "Zola in all his complexity, brilliance, mystery, power."

PHILIP WALKER
Santa Barbara, California

In the know

To the editors:

In reference to Jennifer Bradley's "We Don't Do AIDS" (July 31), the American Life League has enunciated a clear position on treatment of HIV-positive pregnant mothers. We are supporting the amendment to the Ryan White CARE Act offered by Representative Tom A. Coburn, which will require all states, in order to be eligible for CARE grants, to pass laws requiring that every newborn be tested for HIV if the mother did not undergo prenatal testing.

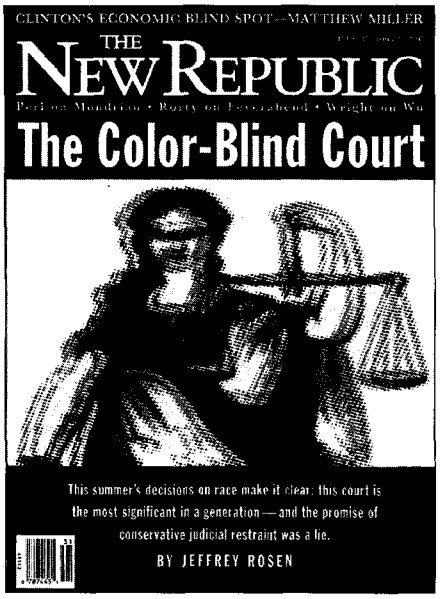
Our medical affairs director, William Colliton, has informed us that the amendment could not in any way be interpreted as analogous to mandatory genetic testing. We believe that many preborn and newborn children can be spared the tragic consequences of HIV if appropriate measures are taken to protect the baby from the deadly virus affecting his or her mother.

JUDIE BROWN
President, American Life League
Stafford, Virginia

To the editors:

I was struck by the difference in the handling of reports by Jennifer Bradley on AZT and Gary Chapman on cyberspace ("Net Gain" and "Not So Naughty," July 31). Chapman, with his hip, in-the-know attitude, nicely takes apart both the "mush-mouthed poster-boy for the unwired" and the Rimm study from Carnegie Mellon. He refuses to take at face value what the authorities are saying.

Bradley's piece is different. Her attitude is one of exasperated moral superiority in favor of science and against the "pro-lifers." But why is she (and TNR)


CLINTON'S ECONOMIC BLIND SPOT—MATTHEW MILLER
THE NEW REPUBLIC
The Color-Blind Court
This summer's decisions on race make it clear: this court is the most significant in a generation—and the promise of conservative judicial restraint was a lie.
BY JEFFREY ROSEN

incapable of examining the claims of the authorities on AZT? This failed chemotherapy, the most toxic drug ever prescribed on a continuous basis, is now being urged for pregnant women and their unborn and then newly born children. Have you read the signs at restaurants lately? (In California, at least, we proudly post warnings for the pregnant against a fatal sip of beer or wine; the mere thought of cigarette smoke near the childbearing makes us shudder.) But Bradley calls for chemotherapy—for chain termination of DNA synthesis—to be applied to the pregnant mother and the developing fetus.

Bradley goes on to mock the possible role of vitamins: "Lifesaving AZT is on a moral par with multi-vitamins?" she smirks. It happens that vitamin A does in fact cut the transmission of HIV from mother to child more effectively than the single Burroughs Wellcome-sponsored AZT test claims to do (see R. Semba, et al., "Maternal vitamin A deficiency and mother-to-child transmission of HIV-1," *Lancet*, June 25, 1994).

I'm not a pro-lifer, and I'm not a vitamin nut (despite being from California). But I am in favor of questioning the evidence.

RUSSELL SCHOCH
Berkeley, California

Space invaders

To the editors:

The question of the viability of space as a new frontier for humanity deserves a better treatment than the cynicism expressed in Michael Lind's "The Nerd Frontier" (July 31).

As the historian Frederick Jackson Turner pointed out, American society owes its dynamic progressive character to the existence of an open frontier in which human roles are undefined, and new ways of doing things constantly called for. But now the old frontier is closed. Without the freedom and challenge it creates, our society is losing its vigor.

Can Mars serve as America's new frontier? Yes. Mars has a twenty-four-hour day with adequate sunlight to support crop growth and possesses an atmosphere and oceans of water frozen into the soil as permafrost. These two substances provide all the carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen and oxygen needed to support life, as well as to produce all manners of organic compounds, such as fuels, plastics and synthetic fabrics. In addition, Mars possesses mineral ores containing in abundance every element needed to create a new branch of human civilization.

If the United States wanted to today, we could use current technology and get humans to the Red Planet within ten years, at a cost of several tens of billions of dollars. Within a few decades these early explorers could develop techniques that would enable the self-sufficient support of significant populations on Mars.

We can open a planet of hope for the free-thinkers, the innovators and the persecuted populations of the coming centuries. Nothing we do could have greater value.

ROBERT ZUBRIN
Indian Hills, Colorado

To the editors:

It appears from "Nerd Frontier" that intelligent life is in short supply at TNR—at least if one defines intelligence as involving arguments that go beyond, "Yeah, right." At a minimum, Lind might have bothered to get Robert Zubrin's (not "Zurbin's") name right.

GLENN HARLAN REYNOLDS
Knoxville, Tennessee

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A New School Myth

In "The History of a Hoax," a wonderful *New York Times Magazine* article last March, Yale professor Barry O'Neill recounted his search for the origins of some widely quoted lists of top school problems. There was a 1940s list featuring gum-chewing, talking, and not putting paper in wastebaskets, and a 1980s version with drug abuse, suicide, pregnancy, and violence. The contrast between the two lists was supposed to show how bad our schools had become. People who cited the lists had no idea where they came from; everyone just picked them up from someone else. O'Neill never did unearth any original sources because there weren't any; instead, he discovered a man who had created the two lists. The man said he knew what to include because he had gone to school in the '40s and "read the newspapers." In other words, the lists were neither polls nor scientific surveys. They were one man's invention circulated by many as social science.

I cited the lists myself until I learned better. So did columnist George Will and former Education Secretary William Bennett. Will and Bennett have also been going around saying that those who know the schools best—the people who teach in them—are more likely than other Americans to put their own children into private schools. That's a myth, too. But it gets repeated often by people who are promoting voucher plans and for-profit schools.

Now these folks have a study by Denis P. Doyle, "Where Connoisseurs Send Their Children to School," that pretends to be research proving them right. But Doyle's own data actually show the opposite: Public-school "connoisseurs" (teachers) choose public schools for their children more often than the general public and far more often than other families with similar incomes. Even three out of four private-school teachers choose public schools for some of their children and two-thirds have all of their children in public systems.

Nationally, Doyle's data show, only 12.1 percent of public-school teachers enroll any of their children in private schools, compared with 13.1 percent of the public. About a third of those teachers also have children in public schools. That means that 92 percent of all public-school teacher families send some or all of their children to public schools, compared with 90 percent of the public. Public-school teachers are more likely than the public to use public schools in 40 of the 50 states. And in 6 of the 10 states where teachers are more likely than the public to use private schools, the difference is less than 1 percent.

Teachers are typically in two-income households, so they tend to have higher family incomes than the general population. And higher-income people tend to use private schools more than lower-income people do. So you would think that the higher-income "connoisseurs" would follow that pattern.

Public-school teachers choose public schools for their own children more often than the general public.

Not so. In the $30,000-$70,000 bracket, 11.6 percent of all public-school teachers have a child in private school, according to Doyle's data, compared with 15.2 percent of other families in that bracket. At an income level of $70,000 or more, only 15.2 percent of teachers use private schools, compared with 24.2 percent of comparable families.

In big cities, the overall proportion of families using private education is above the national average. That's not surprising, since city schools cope with education's highest concentrations of social and behavioral problems. What is surprising is that Doyle's numbers—though not his words—show that public-school teachers in a large majority of the 100 largest U.S. cities choose public schools more frequently than other city families, and at about the same rate in all but a handful of the rest.

Examined by income level, the preference of city-dwelling public-school teachers for public education is even more marked: Teacher families earning $70,000 or more are far more likely than comparable city families to use public schools. Middle-income teachers ($35,000-$70,000) in many cities are also more likely than other families to choose public schools. And city public-school teachers are at least twice as likely as city private-school teachers to use the public schools. Doyle questions the "allegiance" of teachers to public education, but his report shows strong allegiance.

The families in urban areas who send their children to private schools mostly do so because they fear violence and disruption in public schools. But much of the problem in public schools is caused by a small fraction of the students, 2 to 3 percent. Doyle argues, though, in a conclusion as flawed as his analysis, that the "trapped" 97 percent should be given vouchers to attend private schools. Wouldn't it make more sense to send the 3 percent to private schools? Will private schools take and keep them? The toughest students I had as a teacher were those who were kicked out of private school.

The only realistic way to improve education for city families is to make every public school a safe, orderly place where students meet high standards of conduct and academic achievement. That requires hard work and commitment. And that's not a myth.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

SEPTEMBER 4, 1995

HE SHOT THE SHERIFF

Jerry Garcia lives. From Paris to Rome to Berlin, thousands of protesters have spent the summer marching under the banner "Free Mumia," in honor of the charismatic, dreadlocked former Black Panther, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Jamal, of course, is the author of *Live from Death Row* and was convicted of killing a Philadelphia cop in 1982. In Paris, on August 1, the International Parliament of Writers held a press conference, at which Jacques Derrida and Breyten Breytenbach lobbed their *J'accuse* at American justice. The tone was set by one Marie-Agnes Combesques, who bellowed for almost a full hour about the horrors of American racism dating back to the Scottsboro Boys and only stopped, according to accounts of the meeting, because she choked up and wept.

Not one speaker present addressed the matter at hand: whether Mumia Abu-Jamal received a fair trial or was guilty of murder. "One could spend hours listing all the irregularities which tainted this judicial masquerade," said the scornful Derrida, who declined to mention even one. Instead, the man who heralded the death of the author suddenly decided this one should live. Jamal was "a courageous and independent journalist, the voice of the voiceless, a voice that had become intolerable to the state." Whatever the facts, a higher principle was at stake: "the violence and obstacles to liberty imposed on intellectuals, writers, scholars and journalists." The meeting ended when a Turkish journalist in the back row stood up and broke his pen, vowing never to write again until Mumia was free.

Journalism in Turkey will, we trust, find other outlets. American journalists attending PEN's simultaneous press conference in New York at least concerned themselves with whether there was proof of an unfair trial, in which an innocent man was wrongfully convicted. It's a good question, though easily answered. On December 9, 1981, at around 4 a.m., a 26-year-old police officer named Daniel Faulkner stopped a Volkswagen Beetle driven by Abu-Jamal's brother, William Cook. As the two began to struggle, Abu-Jamal, then a cab driver, passed by and saw them and jumped out of his car. When another police car arrived a few minutes later, Faulkner was dead, with four bullets in his back and face, and Jamal was lying in a pool of blood, with one of Faulkner's bullets in his leg. Abu-Jamal's .38 caliber pistol was found at the scene, with five bullets spent. A jury deliberated only four hours before finding him guilty.

Yes, there were irregularities at the trial. Jamal's defenders argue, among other things, that key witnesses were police dupes: a prostitute with forty arrests and a cab driver on probation for felony arson. At the death penalty hearing, Judge Albert Sabo allowed the prosecution to read from a twelve-year-old newspaper interview with Abu-Jamal, then a teenage Black Panther, espousing violence. And there's the problem of the singe-happy Sabo himself, who has sent twice as many prisoners to the chair than any other American judge. With the horrific possibility of a death sentence, such irregularities are enough to stay, indeed, stop execution.

But they're not enough to cast any reasonable doubt upon the verdict. Jamal has never denied it, and he maintains his silence about what happened to this day. The murder of a policeman in cold blood is not something that should warm the hearts of citizens—even those working on the great American novel—anywhere. Perhaps the most absurd aspect of the radical chic defense of Jamal is the assumption that merely being a writer puts one somehow beyond the law. As the poet Cornelius Eady put it, "It proves to me without any doubt how dangerous a good writer actually is, how the ideas and the intelligence of a good writer telling the truth about what he knows and what he sees, how dangerous that is." This is the kind of narcissistic self-importance that no doubt drew the support of activists from Paul Auster to David Byrne, Naomi Campbell to Norman Mailer. (Norman Mailer? Does the name Jack Henry Abbott ring a bell?) Even Jamal, to his credit, doesn't believe the hype. "I'm a man," he said in a recent interview. "To call me a symbol is to dehumanize me." It's not as dehumanizing as killing him, of course, but it's a crass endeavor just the same. •

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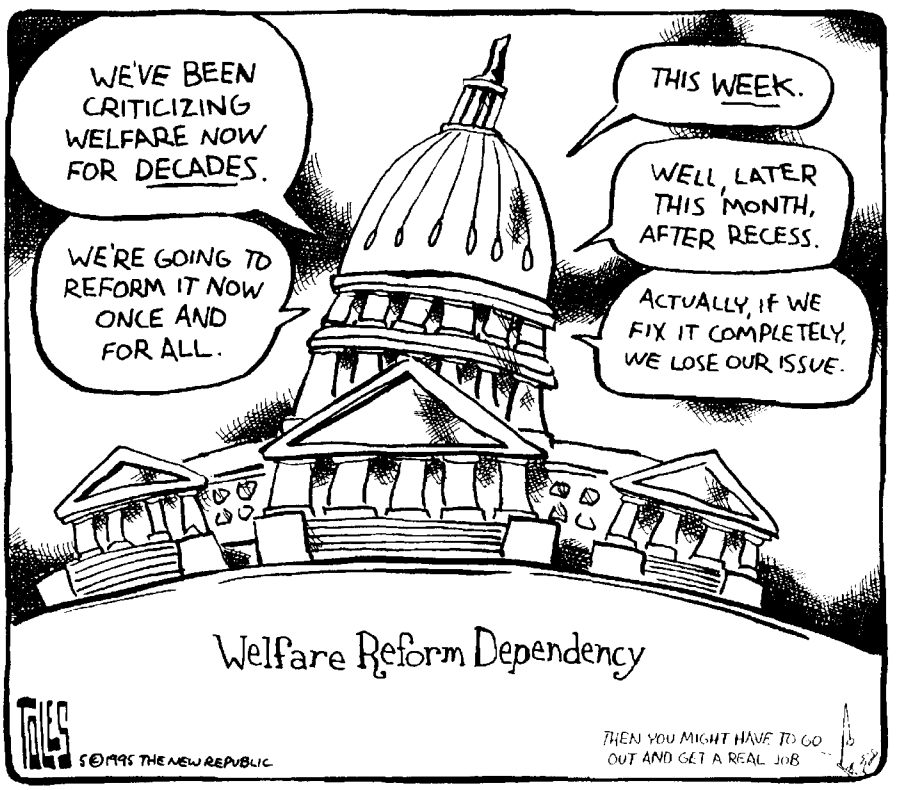
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Police in Annapolis, Maryland, advised a local bank that the safest place to open twenty-four-hour ATMs is in police stations.... PTA officers in New York City have stolen more than $50,000 from candy sales, prom proceeds and other school fundraisers.... Party-hopper Billy Tauzin, now a Republican representative from Louisiana, visited Russia to lecture on "good conservative values." ... In drafting an anti-bigotry resolution, the board of Walworth County, Wisconsin, changed a reference to white supremacist organizations from "hate groups" to "unhappy groups." ... Officials at *Good Housekeeping* expressed embarrassment over forgetting to include President Clinton on the ballot for its most-admired men survey.... The Merrimack, New Hampshire, school board banned all books that portray gay characters in a positive light.... Education Secretary Richard Riley, asked by *Nickelodeon Magazine* whether he doodles in Cabinet meetings, responded, "Yes, I do ... I'm good at stars. And I draw people, smiling people usually. Sometimes I draw muscle-bound people .... I also draw boxes and then make them into three dimensions."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WE'RE GOING TO REFORM IT NOW ONCE AND FOR ALL.
THIS WEEK.
WELL, LATER THIS MONTH, AFTER RECESS.
ACTUALLY, IF WE FIX IT COMPLETELY, WE LOSE OUR ISSUE.
Welfare Reform Dependency
TOLES ©1995 THE NEW REPUBLIC
THEN YOU MIGHT HAVE TO GO OUT AND GET A REAL JOB

SLOBODAN THE CYNIC: Once, enthusiasts of Greater Serbia dreamed of a realm that would stretch from the Adriatic to the Danube and beyond. All that remains of that vision is a line of Serb refugees stretching from Krajina to Belgrade. Among them are many members of the army of the Republic of Serbian Krajina, cousins of those fierce Bosnian Serb warriors supposedly too tenacious for America's quarter-trillion-dollar military. The myth of Serbian military prowess, one of the many that have immobilized U.S. policy, has been shattered by the still-developing Croat-Muslim offensive. Another shattered myth is that of Greater Serbia itself. If critics and apologists for Serbia have agreed on one thing, it is that Slobodan Milosevic was truly dedicated to a unitary Serb state, built on purportedly sacred ancestral lands like Krajina, where Serbs could live without fear of their traditional enemy, the Croats—or even the very presence of Bosnian Muslims. The fall of Krajina has exposed this assumption as a sham. As the 1991 war receded into the past, the Serbian leader has seen Western sanctions as the major threat to his power—and the impoverished Krajina as a drain on Serbia's economy. He has been trying to unload this burden for months, by pressuring and wheedling Krajina Serb leaders into a deal with Croatia, even as Croatia quite visibly prepared for an attack. Krajina's corrupt and incompetent bosses refused—and so, when the Croats poured into their turf, Mother Serbia sold Krajina out. Amid all the justified outrage at Croat behavior, and the declarations of the international duty to protect Serb civilians, Serbia itself has hardly lifted a finger to help. In fact, Milosevic-controlled media blamed the Krajina's own leaders for refusing to accept a negotiated peace. A frenetic round of recriminations is underway among the leaders of Greater Serbia, Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic of "the Serb Republic of Bosnia" and General Ratko Mladic, all of whom claim to represent the national interests of a purported warrior nation that has no viable economy and whose people feel increasingly misled and sick of fighting. The odiousness of the crimes committed in the name of Greater Serbia is only deepened by the realization that this project was, from the start, a mammoth exercise in cynicism.

REALITY CHECK:

Mayor Calls D.C. Bloat A 'Big Lie'

—*The Washington Post*, July 26

Washington Mayor Concedes Necessity of Job Cuts for Budget

—*The New York Times*, July 26

(Thanks to Alan Kirshner of Fairfax, Virginia.)

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ELECTED DEADHEADS: One of the weirdest responses to the death of Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia, icon of America's groggiest subculture, has been the outpouring from staid elected officials usually terrified by associations with '60s-era hedonism. Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, who sat on the stage at Dead shows, confessed, "I feel like I just got kicked in the stomach." Republican governor of Massachusetts, William Weld, crooned, "More than any one song it was just the consistently mellow approach they took to everything." When questioned about the hallucinogenic component of Dead culture, Weld conceded, "at the '91 concert that I went to at the Garden I saw a 14-year-old girl naked as a jaybird, in tears, obviously high on serious drugs." Leahy dodged the issue, employing the perennial art/life distinction: "It's just like I can say I think the world of Van Gogh's paintings, but I am not going to cut my ear off, just because Van Gogh chopped his ear off." National Endowment for the Arts supporters take note.

JERRY GARCIA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

FRIED FRIED: The Borking of Charles Fried of Harvard Law School, who has been nominated to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court by his former student, Governor William Weld, is as unfair as it is predictable. After Fried was nominated at the end of June, a coalition of women's groups, union leaders and liberal activists denounced his record on abortion rights, gay rights and affirmative action. Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts Vice President Susan Webber said: "We are baffled by the choice of Charles Fried, a man so opportunistic in his views that in 1985 he would argue vigorously to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade* on behalf of the Reagan administration and in 1995 would say he is personally pro-choice because it seems politically expedient." This is absurd: Fried's personal support for abortion has never been in doubt; as a law clerk to Justice John Harlan, Fried was largely responsible for creating the modern right to privacy in the *Griswold* contraceptive case. In his subsequent scholarly writing, he has consistently rejected rigid adherence to original intentions in favor of a more moderate, common law constitutionalism. He is far more libertarian than many of the current members of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, who are notoriously illiberal on, for example, free speech. His opposition to the constitutionally rickety *Roe* decision in no way contradicts his support for abortion rights. After a public hearing, scheduled for August 16, the Governor's Council, composed of eight Democrats, will vote on Fried's nomination at the end of August. We hope he is confirmed.

A FEW TOO MANY, MAYBE: "The parishioners at St. Patrick's Cathedral were staggered by news their popular pastor had admitted to sexually abusing a 12-year-old thirty-eight years ago. Nevertheless, many members of Tarrant County's oldest Roman Catholic parish say the disclosure doesn't change their support for the Rev. William Hoover, who has resigned as their pastor. 'It doesn't change my feelings toward him whatsoever,' said Fern Bombadier, 57. 'He is very well-liked and very well-respected here, and he has touched a great many people.' "—*San Antonio Express-News*, July 4

(Thanks to Don Bacigalupi of San Antonio, Texas.)

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM: The Marie Syrkin Fellowship in Letters in Jerusalem is accepting applications for 1995. The Fellowship provides a month's residence for a writer in Jerusalem at Mishkenot Shaananim, the restored nineteenth-century "tranquil dwellings" opposite the Old City walls, as well as transportation costs. It is open to writers in all the forms. Applications should include a statement of purpose and a taste of recent work. The judges are John Hollander, Ruth Wisse and Leon Wieseltier. The deadline is December 1. Materials should be sent to Melanie Rehak at THE NEW REPUBLIC, 1220 19th Street NW, Washington DC 20036. •

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KRAKOW POSTCARD

SAME FREQUENCY

By Masha Gessen

By noon on any given day, the old town square in Krakow fills with carnivalesque sound: the conversation of hundreds of coffee drinkers at sidewalk tables, Slavic medleys from a brass quartet, even the occasional firecracker. The festive sounds acquire an eerie tone when they waft up to the second floor on *Rynok Glowny* (Main Square) 29, where Ali Ramazan Ampukhayev takes me through a new photo exhibition.

Behind panes of glass, the photographs show corpses of children; laughing soldiers crowded atop a tank, brandishing a swastika; a man in camouflage, his face half-destroyed by a shell—all images captured by Polish photographers in Chechnya. Ampukhayev, who is the director of the Chechen Information Center in Krakow and curator of the exhibit, dispenses morbid cracks: "These are soldiers restoring constitutional order. See the order?"

Shows such as this one have gone up all over Poland, part of a campaign that taps into both the Poles' aggrieved sense of history and the Russian government's fear of bad publicity. The Poles feel a great deal of solidarity with the beleaguered Chechens, and that's aggravating Poland's already shaky relations with Russia.

The Krakow center was founded by Polish dissident-cum-English businessman Maciej Jachimzyck days after Russia's initial military action against the breakaway republic. One of its first plans was to launch a radio station called *Svobodny Kavkaz* (The Free Caucasus) that would broadcast what the center's volunteers consider objective information on the war and the world to both Chechnya and Kazakhstan, a country with sizable Polish and Chechen populations. But this spring, after Russian government officials got wind of the proposed radio station, they began pressuring the Polish government to ban it. Russian Parliament Speaker Ivan Rybkin railed against Free Caucasus radio; the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded that its Polish counterpart account for the outrageous venture. In May, Polish President Lech Walesa finally caved in, and, in an odd reading of Polish law, declared the station illegal.

But legal obstacles—mostly a figment of Walesa's imagination anyway—were the least of the little station's troubles. The real problem, which the Russians didn't seem to notice, was that, technically speaking, the dream of broadcasting to Chechyna was just that: a dream. The idea for the station originated with Ryszard Bocian, a member of the Krakow City Council who was once active in underground Solidarity. Recalling the trade union movement's heroic broadcasts during the years of martial law, Bocian had suggested that the Chechen center use radio to disseminate its own version of the truth. Solidarity then ceremoniously presented the center with the equipment it once used. No one seemed to care that Solidarity stations had broadcast to a radius of about 200 kilometers, whereas the information sent by the Chechen center would need to travel 3,000 kilometers. "Technically, it's on the level of fantasy," says Zbigniew Romaszewski, a prominent senator and Chechen supporter who once ran Solidarity radio. In other words, the donated Solidarity equipment is useful only as a symbol, not an actual tool, of resistance.

Symbols, of course, are at the root of both the Polish people's support for and the Russian government's fear of the Chechen center. The pudgy, 37-year-old Jachimzyck seems eager, for example, not only to revive his youthful activism but to redeem his people in the face of another twentieth-century disaster. Wearing a white pinstriped shirt, with an electronic appointment book on his desk and an open attaché case containing a Mont Blanc pen and a Motorola pager, he hardly looks the part of a crusader. Yet Jachimzyck, who was once the director of Oxford University's Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, launches into a sermon: "I spent ten years studying anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Fifty years ago, that genocide shamed Christianity and Europe. Now [Russian Defense Minister] Grachev has turned Chechnya into Auschwitz, and to sit idly by would be simply to dot the i's, to say that Christianity is the same and Europe is the same." On the center's otherwise bare office walls, a portrait of the pope hangs beside a portrait of the less-than-saintly Chechen President Zhokhar Dudayev.

It isn't only a Christian impulse that has moved the Poles to raise $30,000 for the Krakow center, prompted a dozen Polish cities to sign sister-city agreements with Chechen towns, or convinced two powerful political coalitions—Solidarity and the All-Polish Christian Movement for Self-Government—to ask the government to recognize independent Chechnya. The vagaries of history have linked the Poles and the Chechens for more than a century: in the mid-1800s, uppity Poles were sent to serve in the Russian army in the Caucasus; when Poland rose in 1863, the rebel government shipped arms to the anti-Russian resistance in Chechnya. As Romaszewski puts it, "We need to maintain the solidarity among small countries, regardless of what large countries may think about it. Otherwise, we are slaves." The Chechen center has tapped masterfully into this sentiment, proving that, in the propaganda war, as in the war of bombs and bullets, the small Chechen forces can teach their gigantic Russian counterparts a lesson.

MASHA GESSEN writes for *Sevodnia* (Today), a daily newspaper in Moscow.

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Just a few tweaks.

"LOVE YOUR PIECE"

By Robert Sullivan

I propose to offer you one or more unedited pages in *Penthouse* every single month for an indefinite period of time. Consider it a regular column in which you may continue to proffer your revolutionary philosophy.
—from "An Open Letter to the Unabomber," a full-page letter written by Bob Guccione, publisher of *Penthouse* magazine

Dear F.C.,
Received your column yesterday and opened it carefully. I've read it twice now and it has been passed around the office, and we all think that it is a terrific start but that you still have some work to do. Now, I don't want what I have to say to discourage you in any way—we asked you to write for us because we're big fans of your work and because we feel that we at *Men's Day* can give it the kind of thoughtful exposure that it deserves. And, in general, it's fabulous. But I'm afraid we're going to have to do just a little editing, because the piece itself is a little too long, a little too treatise-y and not quite what we were hoping for.

Let's start with the opening. I'm going to be honest with you, which is sometimes the most difficult part of editing, in your case in particular: it's kind of dry. It's a great idea to lead off with the dehumanizing aspects of the industrial revolution, but when you get right down to it, you have to ask yourself, Does the average *Men's Day* reader really care? Don't get me wrong. Just last night I was at a cash machine saying to my girlfriend how nice it would be to see the smile on the face of a teller once in a while, if the lines weren't so damn long. But my instincts tell me that no matter how we finesse it, dehumanization is going to put people to sleep.

So maybe we could make your opening a little more introspective, perhaps beginning with a personal anecdote. Can you think of a moment in your life that really sums up what you're trying to say? Without being too specific, of course. I'm only guessing here, but might a bad experience with a word-processing program have compelled you to swear off computers for good? Or maybe you've had a problem under the hood of a car that you could share with us? With your VCR?

The second section is much better, though I think we'll need to cut it back, too. The psychological parts, for example, are, for our purposes, a little too—well, psychological. I was going to have Bob Breckman, our new young copy editor, zing up your verbiage, but Bob has repeatedly urged me to pass along to you that he has only the greatest respect for your work and in fact wouldn't presume to change a thing. I may tweak a few sentences here and there myself, but certainly nothing to get worked up about.

As for your conclusion, let me say that I am fascinated by what you have to say about freedom, but I wonder if we might be able to cut it from the piece and run it in our Fourth of July issue. It's going to be a great one this year. We've got Colin Powell penning a piece on Betsy Ross for our "Women of History We Love" section and Tom Clancy doing a Q&A with Bob Villa, who, it turns out, has a thing for World War II planes! I hope you'll agree that your freedom essay would fit in perfectly.

The only other editorial request that I have would be to play down the fact that you've killed and injured so many people over the years, or at least soften it a little. It's very impressive, but survey after survey has told us our readers don't want to have their lives threatened in any way. But this, too, is an easy fix.

These are my thoughts. If you could get the reworked piece in by next Monday, that would be great. Fax would be best, unless you have access to a modem. In the meantime, if there is anything I can do to help, please don't hesitate to contact me somehow.

Sincerely,
Tom
Tony Grippo
Editor-in-chief
Men's Day
New York, New York

ROBERT SULLIVAN is a freelance writer.

Bosnia's refugees, our shame.

LET THEM IN

By Peter Schuck and Julie Schuck

Desperate hand-wringing, breast-beating and recrimination continue over the hapless American non-policy in Bosnia. But, despite the inertia, there is one action on which we should all be able to agree. The U.S. can take in many more permanently uprooted Bosnians—at trivial fiscal cost and without narrowing our military or diplomatic options.

The U.S. resettled 7,200 Bosnians in 1994 and will probably accept fewer than 10,000 this year. These numbers are shockingly low given the forcible, often permanent eviction of hundreds of thousands of families from

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their homes. Croatia's blitzkrieg in the Krajina will generate yet more evacuations, as nearly 200,000 new Serb refugees help push Muslims and Croats out of the remaining Serb enclaves in Bosnia.

European countries that have less space than the U.S., fewer resources and greater xenophobia have taken in many more Bosnians than this country has. Germany, still reeling from vast reunification costs, has sheltered more than 180,000 since 1992. But Europe's patience with refugees has worn thin. To qualify for entry in most countries now, a refugee must produce travel documents and prove individual rather than group persecution. Even more worrisome, first-asylum countries such as Croatia threaten to withhold even temporary protection unless others, particularly the U.S., relieve the pressure by accepting more refugees. History teaches a grim lesson: similar pressures led to the deadly "pushbacks" of Asian boat people in the late 1970s and 1980s, which declined only when the U.S. and others agreed to take in more of them.

America should open its doors again. Our capacity to absorb refugees has grown as the decades-old Indochinese and Amerasian programs have wound down. Yet Washington, impelled by an anti-immigrant mood, is moving to reduce all admissions, including refugees. During World War II, the U.S. and Europe closed their doors just as refugee flows from Hitler's genocidal policies increased. Today we risk shaming ourselves once more.

Why have we taken in so few Bosnians? The reasons are less legal than political. Under the 1980 Refugee Act, the president, after consulting with congressional committees, publishes an overall refugee ceiling for the next year (110,000 in 1995) and sub-ceilings broken down by region and sometimes by country. Although these ceilings are not enforceable legal promises to take in a fixed number, they do indicate our intention to accept that many if conditions on the ground warrant it.

Instead of creating a separate allocation for Bosnians, the administration folded them into an overall regional ceiling for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union—48,000 this year, which the administration now proposes reducing to 45,000. This forces Bosnians to compete with other groups whose greater influence in Congress has won them a special, relaxed legal definition of "refugee." These groups, mainly Soviet Jews and evangelical Christians, take the lion's share of slots even though few face the violence so common in Bosnia. Such favoritism condemns many Bosnians to great suffering or even death; it also discredits the integrity of our refugee policy, bolstering the arguments of Senator Alan Simpson and others who cite its unfairness as further reason to reduce refugee numbers.

The State Department's 1993 decision to delegate refugee resettlement gatekeeping in Bosnia to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) has provided America an excuse for inaction. UNHCR has an impossible mission. It depends for its funding and operational support on the very states that seem determined to deny that a refugee emergency warranting resettlement exists. Unwilling to bite the hands that feed it, the agency refers too few Bosnians to the U.S. Last year, it stated that only 35,000 refugees worldwide truly need resettlement—which Simpson quickly cited as a reason to reduce refugee admissions. But the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa has shaken UNHCR; it now says many more Bosnian resettlement slots are required.

UNHCR's reasons for not referring more Bosnian refugees are inconsistent and implausible. Slow to certify the extent of Serbian ethnic cleansing, UNHCR then argued that resettling Bosnians would help the Serbs achieve this goal. Noting that most Bosnians want to remain near their homes, UNHCR elides the tragic fact that many of these same people know that they must leave anyway, perhaps never to return. Helping Bosnians return to their homes is obviously the best remedy—if it is safe. But for many, whose choice is to languish indefinitely in squalid camps or be resettled elsewhere, this option has vanished.

UNHCR also claims that most Bosnian refugees (those without family in the U.S.) do not meet its key criterion for referral for resettlement here: vulnerability. Omar Stupac, a physician and former high-ranking officer in the Bosnian army, knows how narrowly UNHCR can define vulnerability. When Croatian forces invaded his city in 1993 and imprisoned his mother, Stupac went into hiding. Finding identity papers on a dead Croat soldier, Stupac reached the Bosnian Embassy in Zagreb, which issued him a passport. With no family in the U.S., he had to convince UNHCR officials in Zagreb that he was vulnerable to persecution. UNHCR, insisting that he was safe there, rejected his claim. When Stupac left UNHCR's office, Croat soldiers arrested him, transporting him and thousands of other Bosnians to a holding area. Stupac managed to escape, beginning a tortuous journey through Eastern Europe, North Africa and Italy, where the U.S. finally agreed to grant him the refugee status UNHCR had denied. He now lives, safely, and like most Bosnians in the U.S., self-sufficiently, in Queens.

Divided among themselves, political leaders here and in Europe have rejected decisive action on Bosnia. Reasonable people can and do differ about whether they are right. This policy impasse, however, should make the resettlement issue easier, not harder. That we have resolved to do little in Bosnia is reason to do more in the U.S. We must do what we can *here* for those paying a fearful price for our inability to do more *there*. This is a propitious time for change: current law authorizes more admissions in a refugee emergency such as Bosnia, the State Department can readily redefine UNHCR's criteria, and negotiations over next year's target figures have begun. (The administration just proposed accepting up to 15,000 Bosnians but within a lower regional ceiling.) We did not avert the shipwreck, but we do have life jackets to spare.

PETER SCHUCK teaches at Yale Law School. JULIE SCHUCK, a former refugee camp volunteer in Croatia, is a student at Brown University.

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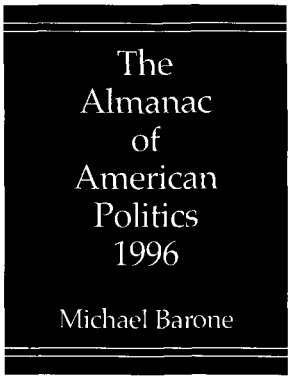

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ZAGREB POSTCARD

FINDERS, KEEPERS

By Samantha Power

While bloated cows looked for someone to relieve their milk pains, stranded cocker spaniels sniffed the corpses scattered at the side of the road. The only indigenous human life in Krajina appeared to be a handful of elderly Serb amputees and a frail-but-determined granny, Milka Jurcic, who was hauling a wheelbarrow up the main road. The kerchiefed widow was not a Serb forgotten by her 150,000 departed kin, but one of several thousand Croatians who had remained in her home in Krajina after Serb secessionists violently seized control four years ago. "I'm not leaving," she said, pausing on her journey, "I'm a Croatian." As my gaze drifted to the white wines, canned meats and tartan blouses in her wheelbarrow, she blushed, clutched my hand and explained apologetically, "I'm all alone here now. Everyone is gone.... Everything is open." Pointing to her war booty, she shrugged, "A girl's got to eat."

Milka Jurcic, Europe's grayest looter, has grasped the former Yugoslavia's one inviolable maxim: finders keepers, losers weepers. Tens of thousands of Croatians have spent the last two weeks living by that maxim and by their own version of another: do unto others what was done unto you in 1991. And, as drunken soldiers are quick to explain, even if nothing was ever done unto them directly, something sure as hell was done unto some Croatian friend or distant relative somewhere.

Last week, Zagreb authorities were rejoicing over their conquest of the Serb-inhabited "Croatian heartland." Itching to leap into Europe, convinced that territorial integrity and chic boutiques are enough to get them there; confident in their U.S. allies, the Croatian government answered every charge of overzealousness with a vehement countercharge. Even the Croatian Army escorts, who led journalists on official (i.e. censored) bus tours of the "liberated" territory couldn't avoid the streets full of burning houses. But inside the bus, the buxom blond tour guides had four handy excuses: "The Serbs were setting their own houses on fire to make us look bad," "There was a Serb sniper inside and only fire would chase him out," "Look at the Orthodox church—it is still standing," or "Haven't you seen what they did to our houses?"

As Serbs streamed out of the corner of Croatia they had called home for four centuries, there were victory parades in Zagreb. The exodus rid President Franjo Tudjman of his nagging "Serbian question" and created his coveted "Croatia for Croatians." Only a few Croatians were bold enough to admit that the Serbs would actually be missed. "I can't imagine Croatia without Serbs," a Croatian journalist in Zagreb joked. "Whenever it rained, it was always the Serbs' fault." A Croatian officer who helped liberate the Serb town of Vojnic admired the gleaming new telephone booth installed there by his compatriots. But he acknowledged that, in a town that had been 91 percent Serb, it probably wouldn't get much use once the elite Croatian Tiger forces ceased their revelry and withdrew. "We really want the Serbs to come back," he said, "What's the point of taking territory if you don't have anyone to live there?"

W.H. Auden wrote, "I and the public know / What all schoolchildren learn. / Those to whom evil is done, / Do evil in return." In 1990 the Croatian authorities began firing Serbs from their jobs. In 1991, as Serbs in the Krajina, backed by the Yugoslav National Army, rebelled against Croatian independence, they began expelling and killing Croats and looting and burning their homes. In 1992, as Serb secessionists rebelled against Bosnian independence, they killed and expelled Muslims and Croats, again looting and burning their homes. And, after four years of fruitless negotiations, this month's Croatian Army offensive sent some 150,000 Serbs fleeing. "What goes around comes around," said General Atif Dudakovic, the scrappy Muslim general in Bihac who, after 1,201 days swimming in a sea of hostile Serbdom, teamed up with the Croatian Army in a pincer attack on the hapless Serb rebels who had terrorized him from the west and north.

The real story behind Croatia's sucess may lie in a cattle shed in the elastic Bihac enclave. There, more than 100 Serb prisoners of war smoked cigarettes, begged Bosnian Fifth Corps officers not to send them back to their nominal masters and generally did their part to expose the myth of greater Serbian brotherhood. Looking positively enormous beside their emaciated Muslim guards, the men, Serb refugees from Bosnia and Croatia rounded up in June and July in Serbia (at the market, along the Danube, in their beds), had been handed guns and plopped down in Serb trenches in parts of Croatia many had never heard of and certainly never wanted to see. When commanders of the feared Serbian juggernaut fled along planned routes at the first bang, nobody bothered to inform this particular brigade of undesirables. Now they fear a prisoner exchange that would force them from the Krajina frying pan into the Bosnian Serb inferno.

"We'd prefer to stay here," said 38-year-old Milan Cuca. Asked if he still believed in the "Four S's": *Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava* (Only Solidarity Saves the Serbs), which has been emblazoned on the walls, uniforms and hearts of Serbs for the last five years, Cuca laughed bitterly and said, "We have another expression with four S's:

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Samo Srbin Srbinu Sijece Glavu." Translation: Only Serbs Cut Other Serbs' Heads Off.

These days, neither Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic nor Serb commander Ratko Mladic would mind taking a swipe at the head of the other. In ignoring Karadzic's call for his resignation, Mladic proved his primacy and exposed Karadzic's vulnerability in a "state" where the guy with the bigger gun and the most friends in Belgrade wins. The Serb Army can still terrorize Bosnian government safe areas and Croatian resorts, of course; and, unlike the Croatians, the Bosnians cannot win. The Serbs will ultimately end up with the ethnically pure statelet they seek, while the Bosnians will get stuck with what they call a *fildzan drzava*, or tiny coffee-cup state, wedged between a de facto greater Croatia and a de facto greater Serbia.

Still, the Serbs are, for now, routed. Both Mladic and Karadzic know their pyrrhic July victories against demilitarized Srebrenica and Zepa will likely be their last: the Bosnian Army around Bihac is potent; the allies have committed themselves to protecting Gorazde; the proven Croatian Army is not through battling Serbs in Western Bosnia.

And, judging from evidence throughout Krajina, the Serbs' second greatest defeat in history offered few heroic scenes of Serb warriors sacrificing for the motherland: the battle Serb leaders must have known they were woefully unprepared to fight quickly degenerated into a pathetic rush for the exits. A day later, dead men in and out of uniform lay beside their bicycles or prostrate atop their tractors like Madame Tussaud's waxen figures. A Serb's aluminum two-wheel Schwinn was simply no match for the shiny T-72 tanks and M-84 howitzers showcased in the Croatian Storm.

Imported to stave off the Ottomans, Serbs in Krajina had lived a hard life for a long time before the ignoble and ill-fated advent of the "Republic of Serbian Krajina" (b. December, 1991; d. August, 1995). It is now difficult to decide who Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic has harmed most: the Muslims and Croats he destroyed or the Serbs he betrayed. After exploiting the Serb rallying cry—"All Serbs in one state"—he may yet drag all Serbs, like it or not, into his state. Croatian Serbs wanted to be treated as full and equal citizens of Croatia, and it was not an unreasonable request. But Milosevic and rebel leader Milan Martic indulged their own fantasies and made Croatian Serbs believe they could constitute a republic of their own in Krajina.

After inciting an insurrection and stripping his people of petrol, electricity, salaries, Croatian friends and summer homes on the Dalmatian coast, Milosevic moved his Yugoslav Army units from Croatia to Bosnia for a repeat performance. Martic, meanwhile, kept a hold on his constituents by convincing them they had no political or economic future under Tudjman. In so doing, he ensured they would have no future at all. Convinced that their very survival hinged upon a flag, a constitution, a currency and an independent state, the Krajina Serbs believed they were choosing between homelessness and a genocidal Croatian regime. They opted for the former.

In her haste to beat her Croatian Army liberators to the shops, Milka Jurcic forgot to remove the price tag from the black apron she had wrapped around her tiny waist. As she prepared to trundle away the wheelbarrow, I asked why she didn't pick up a television set while she was at it. "I thought about it," she reflected, "but I decided it wouldn't be right."

This is, after all, Europe.

SAMANTHA POWER has been covering the war in the former Yugoslavia since 1993.

Gutting habeas corpus.

TERROR STRUCK

By Peter Rubin

Two months ago, in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, the Senate passed a sweeping bill that contained a wide range of measures to address domestic and international terrorism. At the time of its passage the bill sailed through with the backing of ninety-one senators. Buried in the legislation, however, and largely unremarked, are provisions that would repeal fundamental checks on government power over the individual.

The anti-terrorism bill, which the House will take up in September, fundamentally calls into question our national commitment not to imprison people unlawfully. Adopted in haste, without hearings or genuine deliberation, key provisions would change the rules for habeas corpus. Habeas corpus—meaning "to have the body"—refers to a court's writ ordering a warden to release a person who has been incarcerated unlawfully. In the United States, habeas corpus is, in effect, the only mechanism by which a federal judge can ensure that a state court's conviction or sentence is lawful under the federal Constitution.

The author of the provisions, Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, was dismayed by the amount of time it takes to carry out valid death sentences. The Senate legislation, though, doesn't address the problems of death penalty delays. Instead, it abandons *all* federal review of convictions and sentences, regardless of whether the prisoner in question has been sentenced to death. It elevates a concern for order above the traditional American commitment to the rule of law.

Remarkably, the Senate bill's limitations on habeas corpus go even further than the rigid restrictions adopted by the Rehnquist Court over the past few years. There are several ways in which the bill tightens

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the screws. To begin with, no longer will a prisoner receive relief just because the conviction or sentence was wrongful as a matter of federal law. As the law now stands, a federal court can order a new trial or sentencing if the judge concludes that a prisoner is held in custody "in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States." Under the Senate bill, a prisoner will have to show that the conviction or sentence violated "clearly established Federal law, *as determined by the Supreme Court of the United States.*"

This provision defines "law" too narrowly. There are many guides to the meaning of federal law other than the decisions of the Supreme Court; the text of the Constitution, the federal statutes themselves and the decisions of lower federal courts are all grist for judges' interpretations. The Supreme Court hears few cases, and its decisions, though important, provide only a few of the threads that make up the fabric of federal law. Under the Senate bill, however, even if a federal judge concludes that a prisoner's conviction or sentence was in error, the prisoner can't get a new trial unless there already happens to be a Supreme Court decision addressing an identical situation.

In addition, by permitting retrial or resentencing only for violations of "clearly established" law, the bill would make it even harder to correct wrongful convictions and imprisonment. The Supreme Court created the "clearly established" standard so that government officials could not be held personally liable for misconduct in office unless they acted incompetently or knowingly did wrong. The Senate bill introduces this standard—designed to *allow* some wrongful conduct so that officials won't feel hindered in zealously exercising their duties—into precisely the area where wrongful conduct is least acceptable: criminal conviction and sentencing. Even if a federal court concluded that a person was convicted in violation of federal law, that conviction couldn't be set aside unless the trial judge's mistakes clearly demonstrated incompetence, not just errors. Under the Senate bill, prisoners could languish behind bars no matter how fundamental the error that landed them there. This provision would end effective federal review of state imprisonment; to call that "reform" is the height of political cynicism.

Between 1976 and 1991, federal judges have granted a new trial or new sentencing to 40 percent of death row inmates who have sought habeas corpus. Some conservatives argue that this statistic alone demonstrates the need to restrict habeas corpus. But this reversal rate is not a sign of judicial weakness. Federal judges, appointed predominantly by Presidents Reagan and Bush, have not been squeamish about upholding the law where it calls for the death penalty. Instead of addressing the deeper problems that have led to this high reversal rate, the new habeas corpus provision sweeps the matter under the rug: it eliminates the hearings at which wrongful trials and sentencings have come to light. At the very least, the Senate bill should be amended to get rid of this provision. That way, federal judges can do their job and apply the law.

The bill also includes a one-year time limit for bringing a habeas corpus petition after a defendant has been convicted. It allows for exceptions when new facts about the case are discovered, but only if these facts couldn't have been discovered earlier "through the exercise of due diligence." Although this language may seem reasonable enough, it can be used to bar prisoners from bringing claims based on newly discovered facts they in fact could not possibly have uncovered earlier.

For example, under a similar standard, the Supreme Court held in 1991 that a Georgia death-row inmate, Warren McCleskey, would not be permitted to bring a second petition for habeas corpus. McCleskey—who has since been executed—had recently discovered that the government had unlawfully planted an informant in a cell adjoining his to elicit incriminating statements from him. For years, government officials, including the assistant district attorney and officials at the jail, lied to McCleskey's attorney about their relationship with this cellmate. Yet, despite this deceit, the court barred the claim, somehow concluding that, before McCleskey brought his first petition, a "reasonable and diligent investigation" could have revealed to him that the informant had been planted by the State.

Proponents of restricting habeas corpus contend that death-row inmates intentionally withhold claims and wait until the last minute to file petitions in the federal courts, hoping to delay their executions. As a general matter, however, this is wrong. The real reasons for last-minute filings tend to be a lack of resources and qualified counsel—pitfalls left unaddressed by the Senate bill. In any event, the time-limit provisions are not directed only at those few state prisoners awaiting death. The overwhelming majority of prisoners, who face not death but continued imprisonment, have no incentive to delay a judicial resolution of their claims. Their aim is not to avoid the imposition of their punishment but to halt the punishment they are already getting. For them, this provision could serve no good purpose.

To reserve the harshest obstacles to review for those sentenced to death would amount to a substantial break from American tradition. But, if Congress persists in retaining a time limit for habeas corpus, it should at least leave undisturbed the law governing non-capital sentences. (Under current law, although a prisoner is normally permitted only a single habeas corpus petition, there is no fixed time limit for filing it.) And, if Congress does impose a time limit, it should be waived if there's a reasonable explanation for a prisoner's failure to meet the deadline.

Finally, many of the Senate anti-terrorism bill's requirements include no exception for prisoners who claim they are innocent. Where there is such an exception, the new law provides much too high a hurdle: the prisoner must somehow prove that, in light of new evidence, *no individual juror* would have concluded that he was guilty. Under these constraints, a person with a

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strong claim of innocence may be unable even to obtain a hearing. An exception for those claiming innocence has been part of even the most restrictive habeas corpus rules adopted by the Rehnquist Court. Without such an exception, a mere technicality could lead to the worst kind of miscarriage of justice: the execution of an innocent person.

Although the House, in a crime bill passed earlier this year, also restricted habeas corpus, the version of the anti-terrorism bill drafted by the House Judiciary Committee does not. There is, then, still some hope that Congress might decide against these radical changes. And, although President Clinton supports some form of habeas corpus reform, he can still make clear that the Senate's provisions go too far. Courageous elected officials should stand behind the promise, one upon which our country was founded, that the government, as well as the people, must follow the law. Preserving meaningful habeas corpus review—and preventing unlawful imprisonment—is a fundamental part of making sure that promise is kept.

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ON THE HILL

KNOTTY BOYS

By Beth Johnston

By now you've heard all the complaints about our legal system: frivolous lawsuits clogging the courts; endless delays; judges interjecting themselves unnecessarily into complex policy matters. They're staples of Republican rhetoric and are at the center of the GOP plans for legal reform. Less well-known is what's in another set of Republican bills, the current regulatory reforms pending in Congress. The irony is that these bills will in fact create a flood of new cases for the courts.

Over the past several years, legal reform has become a top-drawer Republican issue. Our current system, Speaker Newt Gingrich told an audience at the National Press Club in July, "teaches suspicion, filing lawsuits, forcing confrontations and ... trying to rig the system so you get somebody else's money." Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole has been equally strident, fuming about the outrageous costs of litigation in a recent *Los Angeles Times* editorial. In this, they undoubtedly have a point. And both Gingrich and Dole have already succeeded in forcing through some promised reforms, notably the cutting back of securities and malpractice suits.

But whatever relief these reforms bring to the courts will surely be wiped out by new proposals to alter the drafting and adjudicating of federal rules on health, safety, the environment and dozens of other areas. The House passed its regulatory reform bill this spring, and, though Dole lost a procedural vote in the Senate in July, he still hopes to pass the Senate bill in the fall. Taken together, the House and Senate bills allow industry a myriad of new opportunities to air its disputes with executive branch agencies before federal judges. In all probability, these disputes will clog the judicial system in just the ways the Republicans have condemned.

Under current law, judges usually defer to the rule-making agencies in deciding whether regulations are justified; judges may overturn only those agency decisions they deem "arbitrary and capricious." The GOP legislation would greatly expand that narrow opening: the House bill imposes a detailed protocol for making rules; it says essentially that any agency misstep in observing that protocol can be grounds for a legal appeal. The Senate bill, meanwhile, would let courts reverse rules if they decide that agencies haven't provided enough evidence to warrant those rules.

Ostensibly, these bills aim to force agencies to think twice about imposing new rules. Supporters say they merely want the government to conduct cost-benefit analyses and other commonsense tests to "whittle away the excesses of bureaucracy without sacrificing public health and safety," as Senators Orrin Hatch of Utah and Jon Kyl of Arizona put it in a *New York Times* editorial. But that claim has a whiff of disingenuousness. Agencies have been running cost-benefit analyses on their own for years; the Clinton administration has also mandated that agencies run such analyses in most important cases. It's hard not to conclude that the true purpose of the bills, as environmental and consumer groups charge, is to hinder the enforcement of laws that big business doesn't like. After all, the new, expanded judicial review would give businesses a second chance to strike down onerous rules when initial agency decisions don't go their way.

The potential for expensive judicial micromanagement of the law is rife under the Republican proposal. To judges who have an agenda to pursue (or who are simply sticklers for detail), the reforms are a virtual invitation to reverse agency rulemaking and substitute their own conclusions. Such provisions could open the door to judicial recklessness of the sort recently demonstrated by District Judge A. Andrew Hauk. Ruling on a federal government suit against chemical companies responsible for dumping DDT into the Pacific Ocean, Hauk derided environmentalists involved in the suit as "do-gooders and pointy-heads running around snooping," according to *The Los Angeles*

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Times. After five years of litigation, he threw out the case last March, even though the government had spent $24 million collecting evidence to demonstrate the harms of DDT dumped directly into Los Angeles sewers in the 1950s and '60s.

Such judicial behavior, of course, is the exception; not all judges have antipathy toward the Sierra Club. The problem, though, is that even judges who want to be evenhanded often don't have a broad understanding of the technical issues at stake. "Courts," observes David Vladeck of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, "are ill-equipped to micromanage administrative agencies." In environment-related suits, for example, plaintiffs have asked judges to decide whether automobile trap-oxidizer filters are suitably durable; to determine adequate margins of error on calculations for lead safety; and to compute baseline measures for hydrocarbon emissions from asphalt. Even for someone with the I.Q. of Antonin Scalia, such questions are bound to be bewildering.

It is here that the increased possibilities for litigation will likely work to the advantage of businesses. First, industry, with both the money and the motivation, is in a better position to file suits than are consumers. The more suits you file, the greater your odds of winning some of them. Second, more litigation means more delay. In other contexts the GOP has claimed to loathe slow-moving courts. But when it comes to regulations, delay helps companies to avoid implementing costly rules. Even judges who worry about overturning an agency decision are less hesitant to stay or suspend the rule while the case is in court—and that could be years. For example, under current pesticide-removal law, which grants a host of opportunities for court challenges, it can take almost a decade for a carcinogenic chemical to be removed from agricultural use. By exposing many more regulations to this sort of judicial review, the Senate bill would allow all sorts of other dangers to health and safety to persist unchecked while appeal cases clog the legal system.

Right now, all that stands in the way of a new tide of potentially baleful regulatory lawsuits are a few Democratic senators such as Minority Leader Tom Daschle who have held their ground against Dole on a procedural vote. But others, such as Chuck Robb and Kent Conrad, have sought a deal that does little to eliminate the bill's central flaws. President Clinton has threatened to veto the law in its current form, but he might sign a bill that was substantially overhauled. There are plenty of sensible compromise plans open to Congress. They could cut out the judicial review provisions of the bill while still requiring more thoroughgoing analysis of the impact of potential rules. Or they could just repeal the most burdensome of the health, safety and environmental laws already on the books: a real deregulation that would not bog the system down with still more lawsuits. Instead, they've managed to land on what almost everybody agrees is the worst of both worlds: a costly and complicated system that achieves little more than deadlock. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BIG ZIT

By Matthew Cooper

One of the ironies of the 1990s may turn out to be the way conservatives saved the Clinton presidency. Take the Rehnquist Court. By curtailing affirmative action, the Court is helping to resolve a dilemma that the Democrats seemed incapable of reconciling themselves. Likewise, the election of a GOP Congress probably gives Clinton a decent chance of winning next year. Now Clinton can run as the brake on the excesses of Gingrichism.

There's another, lesser-known conservative who may save Clinton, too. He is Jay Stephens. Stephens, you may recall, is the former U.S. Attorney retained by the Resolution Trust Corporation to investigate the failure of Madison Guaranty, the Arkansas thrift owned by Clinton's Whitewater partner, James McDougal. It was the RTC's appointment of Stephens that caused George Stephanopoulos to yell at his friend Joshua Steiner at the Treasury Department, which oversees the RTC. Stephanopoulos's harangue was inappropriate, but his complaint had merit. After all, Stephens wasn't known as impartial: he considered seeking the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in Virginia, and he'd publicly lambasted Clinton for dismissing him and other U.S. Attorneys.

As it turned out, though, Stephanopoulos's anger was misplaced. Stephens's preliminary findings, contained in a 143-page report, pretty much confirm what the Clintons have been saying: that they lost money on the land deal and that they were passive investors. There's no evidence, Stephens found, that they knew of McDougal's financial shenanigans. Bits of the report leaked in June, but the document only began to circulate last week when Barney Frank made it public by entering it in the public record. By that time, with public hearings dominating C-SPAN, Stephens's work got little attention.

That's too bad, because the report suggests that Whitewater isn't much of a scandal. Sure, Stephens's investigation, which only covers the land deal and its aftermath, is rife with qualifications. The records of Whitewater are "incomplete." Still, if you combine what was learned at the Senate and House hearings with the Stephens report, Whitewater looks less like a cancer on the presidency and more like a really bad zit. In fact, only aspects of the affair merit much worry.

Here's one effort to sort out what's worth worrying about and what isn't:

The Land Deal. What was Whitewater? The basics really are simple. In August 1978 Bill Clinton was Arkansas's

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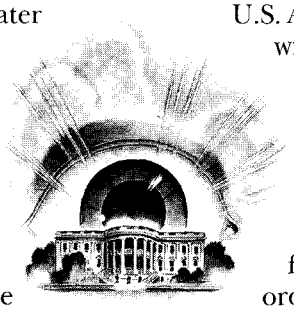
attorney general and a candidate for governor. His wife, Hillary Rodham, as she was then known, was an associate at the Rose Law Firm. Their salaries totaled $51,173. When the two were approached by another couple, James and Susan McDougal, to go in on the purchase of 230 acres in northern Arkansas, the deal sounded promising. They would buy the land with borrowed money, divide it and sell it. McDougal, who had known Clinton when the two worked for Senator J. William Fulbright in the 1960s, came with good references. The august Fulbright was himself one of McDougal's partners. And Clinton had managed to make a small profit on a land deal with McDougal in 1977. For the Clintons, the deal promised only modest returns. If the project went perfectly, Stephens calculates in his report, the Clintons would have made $47,500. Ironically, Whitewater legal fees have cost the First Couple more than $1.1 million.

Whitewater, as we now know, turned out to be a bust. In 1992, the Clinton campaign's own audit contended that the Clintons lost $68,382 in the deal. Once in office, the Clintons amended that figure to $46,137 to account for money Clinton had given to his mother and that he mistakenly claimed as a Whitewater expense. Republicans have hinted darkly that the Clintons actually made money. Forget it. The Stephens report concludes that the Clintons lost $42,192 on Whitewater—a loss that's mighty close to what the president and the First Lady claimed.



Did the Clintons know that something fishy was going on with McDougal's various holdings? Critics have charged that those brainy Clintons must have known what McDougal was up to. You can see their point. But, again, according to Stephens, the Clintons were, as they claimed, passive in the extreme. Between 1978 and 1988, when McDougal had a nervous breakdown and Hillary Rodham Clinton took over the carcass of the by-then-defunct project, the Clintons had, according to Stephens, "little direct involvement" in Whitewater. They never signed a Whitewater company check, and none of the communications from McDougal prove the Clintons treated Whitewater any more seriously than people who invest their money and forget about it.

The most troubling question about the deal is whether the Clintons were really at risk or whether, with a wink and a nod, they were taken care of by McDougal. While Clinton lost $42,192, Stephens found, the McDougals lost $158,523. If they were fifty-fifty partners, why didn't the Clintons and the McDougals share the losses equally? But there's no evidence—not even the letters released by the House last week—that proves the Clintons knew that McDougal was sticking a lot more money into the project than they were.

The other outstanding question from the original deal has to do with tax deductions. Here the Clintons seem to have been cute, even deceptive, with their returns. In 1992, when Whitewater first broke, the Clintons launched their own investigation of their finances and acknowledged that they took improper deductions in 1984 and 1985 for interest payments that the McDougals had paid. Evidence suggests that the Clintons made the deductions knowingly. It wasn't until late 1993, *The New York Times* discovered, that they actually sent a check to the IRS. Conservatives are right to say that this kind of behavior undercuts the Clintons' piety. But a late tax payment is not a threat to the republic. Other interest deductions, such as a $13,272 "tax bill" that the GOP has cited, are a matter of dispute between Clinton lawyers and the Republicans. It needs to be sorted out, but so far it just doesn't look that bad.

Hillary, Rose and the Regulators. OK, here's where the Congress is right to turn its attention. Was there a cover-up of Whitewater? The most sensational charge comes from Jean Lewis, a federal banking regulator who told the House Banking Committee that she was pressured by her superiors not to go after Madison Guaranty and the Whitewater deal. There was "a concerted effort to obstruct, hamper and manipulate" her work, Lewis told the committee. Maybe. There was hesitation to go after Madison, but it's not clear that the hesitation was politically motivated. It was Charles Banks, a (Republican) U.S. Attorney in Little Rock, who did not go along with Lewis's recommendation to prosecute, for fear it would alter the 1992 elections. Neither did the career attorney in Washington who reviewed the case. They were hardly Clinton thugs. All said, it's worth looking to see if there's more to Lewis's claims that she was bullied, but no one has proved as much. As for the Clintons, there's no evidence that they ordered Lewis silenced.

What about the Rose Law Firm and the regulators? Here it looks as though Mrs. Clinton has been dishonest. She not only represented Madison in one simple transaction before the state, as she has long maintained, but, according to new evidence, she had lots of dealings with Madison Guaranty and other McDougal-controlled entities. When questions about conflicts of interest arose during the 1992 campaign, Mrs. Clinton offered her infamous defense: "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas." She should have offered an accounting instead. This sort of dissembling, though, still doesn't amount to a crime.

July 20, 1993. Even *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page, which has been relentless in pursuit of Whitewater, has conceded that Deputy White House Counsel Vincent Foster took his own life that night. The questions that remain are these: Was Foster worried about Whitewater, and what happened in the office the night he died? The first question is unanswerable. No one can prove what was on Foster's mind. And, even if one could, so what? Foster's despondency doesn't, by itself, prove anything. Clinical depressives exaggerate. Besides, if any single thing was agitating the man, it may have been the flap over the White House travel office, not Whitewater. That file is bigger than the Whitewater file and it includes lots of press clips. Foster had, for instance, underlined a column by conservative Tony Snow that, with hyperbole typical of the Clinton era, said the "allegations in the travel

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office scandal dwarf those of Watergate."

There are, of course, conflicting accounts of what happened after Foster died. Hillary's chief of staff, Maggie Williams, denies taking files from Foster's office on the night of his suicide; an officer from the Secret Service's Uniformed Division swears she did. Clinton pal Susan Thomases and former White House Counsel Bernie Nussbaum disagree over who brought up the topic of access to Foster's office. There's no getting around the discrepancies; but, unless you believe there was a vast amount of perjury committed at the hearings, no one pilfered or destroyed any document. Besides, just what would a smoking-gun document have said?

In the coming months, the Senate and House committees will resume their hearings, but the real action will be with Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel. And what will he come up with? Maybe some tax fudging, but probably nothing prosecutable. White House advisers acknowledge that Stephens, though a conservative, managed to produce a sympathetic report, but they doubt, in the words of one Clinton adviser, that "lightning will strike twice." But, if Starr spares the Clintons an indictment or a reprimand—and that seems more and more likely—there will be another conservative to thank. •

Los Angeles after identity politics.

NOT-SO-CLUELESS

By Jan Breslauer

It was probably too much bad performance art that did it—just about pushed me over the edge. After years of watching multicultural solos and theater pieces ad nauseam—it's my job, I'm a reporter, I cover the culture front—I've arrived at a point of exquisite ambivalence. On some nights, after seeing some of the most provocative stage fare of my career, I'm a beaming Jane Alexander. On other nights, subjected to yet another shotgun marriage of identity politics and the arts, I'm a snarling Jesse Helms.

These days, however, I'm not the only one snarling. Deep in the heart of hippest Los Angeles, where Southern senators fear to tread, an emerging generation of artists and artsy types are fed up with it, too. And I don't just mean white people. These post-multiculturalists are L.A.'s new wave. Numerous and various, they are men and women in their 20s and 30s who come from a variety of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds and run the educational and class gamut. As a group, they have three salient features in common: their age, a shared interest in the arts and an attitude toward race that is casually, yet staunchly, integrationist. Race, they'll tell you, is pretty much a non-issue.

You wouldn't know it from the overblown coverage of campus nationalists, but college-age L.A. isn't dominated by placard-carrying separatists sporting Mexican flags or brim-to-the-back X caps. Back off from this high-profile minority for a minute and take a look at the bands, theaters, dance companies and video groups populated by this other group of twentysomethings, and you see a different picture. There, in the clubs, coffeehouses and galleries, you find a diverse group of artists and others who are working and hanging out together, indifferent to the cultural tensions that supposedly divide them. Identity politics have gone the way of gangsta baggies.

Multiculturalism hit the L.A. culture scene in the late 1980s. The city was ripe for the trend. A majority of its population is non-white, and its cultural establishment is relatively young. L.A.'s major arts institutions, including the cultural acropolis, the Music Center, are pretty new, dating only from the 1960s; they're not nearly as entrenched as their counterparts in Eastern cities. The strength of pop culture here also means that the bastions of high art tend to be less self-assured, less prepossessing and more open to change than those in New York. The West's institutions of higher education are also different: there's no Ivy League to enshrine the canon and, by extension, the European-based arts, at least not in quite the same way. Stanford, California's most prestigious school, led the multiculturalist wave with a controversial curriculum revision in 1988.

The impact of late-'80s multiculturalism, then, was even more powerful in L.A. than on the East Coast. From the late 1980s on, money became available for artists who wanted mainly to ponder their ethnic identities. Everyone scrambled to get ahold of these ponderers to fill the brown-black-yellow-red-whatever-designated slots in their artistic seasons. To be considered for public grants from the city and elsewhere, artists merely had to show the social benefits their art-

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work would bring to some "underserved" community.

You stood to get lucky if you were a Vietnamese-American ex-con who wanted to visit prisons and teach mural painting to Vietnamese-Americans. You weren't so likely to hit the jackpot if you happened to be a Vietnamese-American artist with a penchant for neo-expressionist painting. And, if you were white and into, say, conceptual installation art, forget it. Not only did this system put whole genres of abstract art—not to mention simple questions of merit—beyond consideration, it also compelled artists to try to pass themselves off as social workers.

The results were predictable. I remember the moment when I finally had enough. In the fall of 1993, I went one night to the East West Players, this country's oldest Asian American theater, to see a new solo piece called *Beside Myself* by the talented actress-writer Amy Hill (she's Japanese-Finnish-American, not that it should matter). I'd been impressed by Hill's previous outings and hoped for something above par. But even she had succumbed. There stood Hill—you might recognize her as grandma on Margaret Cho's TV series "All-American Girl"—perched atop three outsized building blocks with the letters A-M-Y face forward, rattling off anecdotes about the slings and arrows of growing up Japanese-Finnish. The material didn't do her talents justice.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

"Anyone who's seen an autobiographical solo in recent years knows the recipe," I wrote in *The Los Angeles Times*. "Part One: I Was a (Your Ethnicity Here) Child, Which Was Confusing. Part Two: I Suffered Because of Society's Attitude Toward (Y.E.H.). Note: This section must have the protagonist suffer at the hands of nasty schoolkids. Part Three: I am Forging Ahead, Despite Media Treatment of (Y.E.H.)."

The L.A. arts establishment didn't escape the scourge, either. The last season of the city's flagship theater, the Mark Taper Forum, was its most baldly multicultural ever, thanks in part to its Latino Theatre Initiative, which is sponsored by a $1.47 million grant from the Lila Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund, the largest private funder of the arts in the United States. In the past eighteen months, theatergoers have seen: Luis Valdez's *Bandido!*, a historical musical told from a Chicano perspective; *Black Elk Speaks*, which was targeted to appeal to the Native American audience; and Eduardo Machado's Cuban-American saga, *Floating Islands*, among others.

Black Elk Speaks can serve as a paradigm for the worst excesses of multicultural art. Adapted in the 1970s from John Neihardt's 1932 book about the famed Oglala Sioux leader and revived in the 1990s, the piece is as much group therapy as theater. In a play-within-the-play device of the creakiest kind, the action (such as it is) begins with members of a tribe gathering into a circle to hear what the wise old elder (in plays like these, there are no other kind) has to say. Murmuring assent whenever Black Elk speaks, the men and women watch as their peers re-enact stories from their collective history. Starting with Columbus and continuing on through Little Bighorn and Wounded Knee, it retells familiar stories of bad-guy whites and noble Native Americans. Artistically, it's a dead ringer for a social studies class project in junior high school.

The other two Taper shows were just as flawed. By 1995, however, something interesting was happening: the critical public was no longer feeling obliged to celebrate them. The plays garnered mostly negative, sometimes scathing, reviews. Many of the people who paid for their seats agreed with the critics. As Taper Artistic Director Gordon Davidson said last spring, "Some people are voting with their feet, by not coming, or coming less often." It reflected a much broader and deeper trend throughout the city.

Down at the far corner of Little Tokyo, there's a long, narrow coffeehouse called Troy, which features a dinky, odd-shaped stage at the far end and a bare-bones patio out back. Art hangs on the brick wall opposite the cappuccino bar. The place is frequently packed with rowdy black-clad throngs of young men and women of an array of races, shapes and sizes. On a late night towards the end of 1994, the crowd is spilling out into the street. Onstage, a band called Black Fag is playing. They're not a real band; they're more of a performance or faux band—like Spinal Tap, only stranger. The musicians are

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all posing as young, D.C.-based black guys, though none actually is one. Black Fag consists of a white woman, a black man who's usually in drag, an Asian and a Latino—all Angelenos.

Even at the height of separatist nationalism, you could find groups like Black Fag at Troy. It was a safe haven from the political correctness police. Yet it was also as diverse and tolerant a venue as you could find. A coffeehouse-gallery-performance space on the edge of downtown's Chandleresque warehouse district, Troy opened in 1990 and soon became known as an off-hours haunt for many of L.A.'s leading Latino artists. Although frequented by Chicanos, it was staunchly inclusive, not only in its clientele but also in the acts that performed there and the art that hung on the wall.

The credit for its integration went to the couple who ran it (until money problems forced them to close at the end of the year). Sean Carrillo, a documentary filmmaker and editor, is perhaps best known as one of the guerrilla artists of ASCO, the Chicano collective of the '70s and early '80s famous for its protests against such bastions of Latino invisibility as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Carrillo's wife and partner, Bibbe Hansen, is a writer-director, as well as an alumna of Andy Warhol's Factory; she starred alongside Edie Sedgwick in the film *Prison*. The daughter of the late Fluxus artist Al Hansen, she is also the mother of a 23-year-old performance artist named Channing and another son, 25-year-old Beck (of "Mellow Gold" fame), the alternative rock phenom.

Hansen thinks it might be the absence of conflict that has rendered these new integrationists a non-story. "What do you ever read about completely assimilated, educated Chinese-Americans, blacks, Anglos, Chicanos and [others] hanging out? Never. But they're there." Carrillo's views, for someone who is almost a definition of cutting edge and who was once part of a radical Chicano group himself, are revealing: "I have to point a finger at the Chicano and other nationalists for being really wrapped up in this mythos about Aztlan and this nationalism for a nation that never existed.... From a political point of view, it's ridiculous to wrap themselves in the flag that way. I mean, does a dashiki really define identity?"

At Troy, it never did. Today, the kind of casual interracial collaboration for which Troy was a breeding ground is becoming more or less the order of the day. In L.A. dance, there are companies such as Mark Mendonca's Steps Ahead Tap Trio, whose members are Latino and African American. Naomi Goldberg's rainbow-hued Los Angeles Modern Dance and Ballet, which has commissioned collaborations with an array of artists of various races, casts its dancers without regard to the kind of ethnic body-typing that's still the norm in classical dance.

The theater scene now boasts such companies as A Noise Within, a classical troupe founded by a white-white-Latina triumvirate of American Conservatory Theatre grads that stages consistently superior productions of Shakespeare, Chekhov, Molière and others. Here, you'll find a core group of actors and others who needn't worry that their looks will keep them out of the running for coveted roles. And, while a number of larger theaters throughout the country experiment with color-blind (or what the mainstream theater calls "non-traditional") casting, they seldom do so as unself-consciously as at A Noise Within. San Diego's Old Globe Theatre or New York's Public may present a classic with a racially mixed group of actors, but that aspect of the casting still tends to become, in and of itself, a focus of attention. Sometimes, directors also feel the need to make interpretive choices to accommodate or underscore this casting. At A Noise Within, color-blind casting is simply business as usual, unremarked upon if not altogether unnoticed.

On the music side, Black Fag isn't alone. Any number of young contemporary bands gleefully poke fun at race as an Issue. One racially mixed band, fronted by its only African American member, calls itself the Negro Problem. Even bands that aren't integrated can turn up playing alongside culturally unified groups of different races. You can go hear a Chicano group, a black band and a white band playing on the same bill in a concert where their races won't be an issue for either the bands or the audience. Five years ago, such a lineup would have been unthinkable.

Today, the popular hangouts tend to be those where the partiers come in more shades than a Benetton ad. At the West Hollywood spot known as B-Side at Checca, the polyglot crowd joins in friendly group dance formations, watching hip-hoppers of every hue go through their rubbery moves to a mix of music that ranges from jazz to reggae. The more eclectic the soundtrack, the better. Deejays in many of the trendiest clubs like to spin tunes from several different genres and disparate cultures within a single set. You can hear disco with hip-hop, house mixed with jungle and industrial, glam rock and techno-pop, salsa spliced into funk. Styles once considered white are mixed with black and Latin sounds, and new combinations are dreamed up each week for a polymorphous yet effectively monocultural in-crowd on the prowl for the latest sound. It's more proof that American popular culture, even when it's policed by the upholders of p.c., has a built-in tendency to merge and converge and fuse all the elements that inform it. And that includes racial elements.

It's around 10 p.m. on the night after the University of California Regents put the kibosh on affirmative action. I'm sitting in a 1950s steakhouse—gilt-framed faux paintings, Naugahyde booths, dingy lighting—in a mostly Salvadoran part of Koreatown, feeding, as the twentysomethings put it, on heart-attack cuisine with a couple of guys in their 20s. Jon Salenger and Jeff Ono both grew up in L.A., though they didn't get to know each other until they were at New York's Cooper Union. Currently, Jeff—a buff 21-year-old Japanese-American with a shaved head, a silver

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earring and a monochrome tattoo on his right bicep—writes grants for a non-profit arts organization. Jon—a half-Jewish 23-year-old with two-toned hair, the lanky good looks of an MTV prototype and a respectable intellectual angst—is holding down various art-related jobs.

It's a fairly dead Friday night, which is how I have managed to persuade Jeff and Jon to talk to me, rather than dropping in on one of the many proudly transient clubs that populate L.A. Race is not a topic they are keen to talk about, but I pursue it. "I guess that I find that I spend most of my time trying to avoid having it be an issue," Jon says. "It's not something that I want to affect my life." When I press for particulars, the unconscious integrationism of his life becomes clear. "I hang with Jack, who's Japanese; or with Simone, who's black; or with Rico, who's black," he says. "It doesn't matter. You're just who you are. My friends are a pretty mixed crowd. When I go out, I don't usually go out with just white people."

Jeff joins the conversation. "With a group of friends, you come to an understanding that it really isn't an issue," he says. "What I hate about going out is going into groups of people that all look the same. It's very threatening to me when everybody has the same haircut, the same style."

"There are still elements of separatism around," adds Jon. "Especially in college, but outside as well, I felt like, with the people who were most vocal, there were these weird ulterior motives going on, and a lot of it had to do with image. I also have the feeling that people were guilted into stuff [i.e. protests]. It seemed ingenuine to me."

For Jon and Jeff, identity can't be subsumed by race. Even the clubs on the Sunset Strip such as the Roxbury, once strongholds of the predominantly Westside crowd, have started putting on talent contests and other events where the crowds cut across not only race lines but also class lines, bound instead by a common affinity for locking, hip-hop or whatever happens to be the thing that night. "Indie rock tends to be white and hip-hop tends to be Hispanic and black," says Jeff. "But, when you go to a hip-hop club, the whites there tend to have taken on that culture, which came out of young blacks and Hispanics. It's almost like people aren't [aligning] themselves [by] race, they're [aligning] themselves with cultural influences. They are chosen. In social scenes, there aren't these strict racial lines, but there are these cultural lines."

Not that Jon and Jeff are eager members of the campaign against affirmative action. When I ask them about the regents' vote, there's an uncomfortable silence. "I think there's problems with affirmative action," Jon says. "But to get rid of it completely is so irresponsibly reactionary. A lot of people confuse the fact that they can, in their personal relationships, not address race as an issue with the idea that they cannot address race politically. I'm not what you call an integrationist, but people need to get used to dealing with people of other races."

This kind of attitude is beginning to percolate upward. L.A. galleries that a few years ago were putting on shows curated solely on the basis of the artists' ethnicity now wouldn't dream of doing so. At the Taper, where *Black Elk Speaks* was typical of last season, the schedule for next season includes only one play that you would call multicultural. The city of L.A.'s Cultural Affairs Department (the headquarters of p.c. grant-making) recently announced a new category in which individual artists will be eligible to receive funding based not on the social-service use value of their projects but on aesthetic merit. What a concept.

The music is ear-splitting when Jeff, Jon and I arrive at the small Silver Lake club on our post-steakhouse rounds. It's altie (alternative rock, if it's been a while since you were carded) night, and there's a three-white-men band on the five-by-ten parquet that serves as a stage. Yet, among the 150-odd bodies spread out around the bar, the band seems to be one of the few clusters of people all of the same race and gender. A long-haired Latina is cuddling up next to an Asian man with a shaved head. A white woman and a black woman chat over drinks at a nearby table. Even the pack at the center of the room—which includes two folks wearing stretch-lace women's undergarments in lieu of hats—is mixed.

They are, for the most part, an anti-fashion crowd, given to dressing down in T-shirts and jeans. Those who do affect tribal stigmata as fashion are haphazard about it. Gone are the days when only young black males wore hip-hop togs or only Chicanos favored certain vintage flannel shirts. Today, you're much more likely to see an assortment of symbols and icons on one person, who may not be from the ethnic group with which the fashions were once associated. These styles are worn less as affiliational badges than as fashion statements, and relatively minor ones at that.

A young Asian woman, for example, wears an oversized vintage jumper with a white tee underneath and on her head a blue bandana (which, not long ago, would have been strictly for gangbangers only). On her feet are clunky Doc Martens boots. Nearby, a white guy displays a buzz cut with a lightning rod design shaved into it, a style that first turned up on black men; his clothes, though, are strictly '50s, a style favored by many Latino guys. Not far from him, a Latina sports the retro-Swing look, while her white girlfriend with the bright-yellow- and black-hair goes for a hip-hop ensemble to set off her modern primitives-style body piercings.

When the band takes a breath between songs (and I use the word loosely), I shout a comment to Jon and Jeff about these overtly mix-not-match demographics. It takes a bit of explaining and most of the lung power I've got left before they figure out what I'm talking about. Finally, Jon gets it. "Well, yeah," he says, "I guess it looks like L.A." Pretty soon, it may look like America. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

All the World's a Film

Whenever I teach a course in the history of film, I begin with *The Great Train Robbery*. Edwin S. Porter's eleven-minute work, made in 1903, was not the first to use editing or the first to use a popular play as its source, but Porter certainly advanced the art of editing, and his film illustrates a transition in audience expectations.

Porter's editing helped to free film from the strictly linear story and showed, among other things, that different simultaneous time strands are part of its power. The transition embodied in Porter's film is fascinating: some of the fourteen scenes are patent theater imitations, with painted scenery and with actors playing profile, while others are as "real" as anything done today. Some scenes, for instance, are on top of a rushing train, with the actors moving as naturally as the moment requires. Porter clearly was counting on an audience conditioned by a lifetime of theatergoing, expecting scenery that looked like scenery, yet eager for the new. (This paradox continued for years. In 1920 Griffith made *Way Down East*, in which there are scenes shot in an actual blizzard, yet the heroine's bedroom has snow painted on the windows.)

Porter dramatized the transition further. The interior of the railroad depot, which has a window, is a patent canvas-and-paint job with a window, yet at one point a real locomotive goes past the window drawing a real train. (Double exposure, of course.) Porter assumed, correctly, that audiences would welcome the contrast.

Imagine being a member of that audience. People could have had as much as eight years of film-going experience by then, mostly of non-fiction films, but now they were entering a dimension in which everything in the world could become a character in a story. A breeze, a leaf, a raindrop, a ship at sea could become a member of the cast. (Even today those facts have not lost a tickle of the metaphysical.)

But one particular moment in Porter's film is my chief reason for showing it. The matters mentioned above have been much discussed: that one moment has been neglected. Robbers stop the train out in the countryside. (Porter cleverly films the train at an angle, not straight across the screen, to give the composition perspective.) At gunpoint, the passengers are forced to disembark and line up against the train, hands raised, while the robbers go down the line taking money and jewelry. One of the passengers, a man in a derby, is apparently eager to protect his belongings. He runs. One of the robbers shoots him in the back. He falls.

This, I believe, is an evolutionary moment in the history of film, one that revised concepts of space in drama. That passenger doesn't run right or left: he runs, at a slight angle, directly toward us, toward the camera.

If this had been a scene in a play and the actor had run toward the footlights, the audience would instantaneously have expected him to leave the fiction and join the facts—themselves. Equally swiftly they would have thought that the actor or director was out of his mind. But Porter surmised that his audience, prepared perhaps by the verism of the train itself, would be ready to enter a new realm.

What was that realm? The length and breadth of the world itself. The universe. Universes yet unknown. When an actor leaves the stage, he steps out of the play. When an actor leaves a film shot, in any direction, we simply assume that he is continuing on in the rest of the world. Even when an actor walks out of a set in a studio, we don't envisage him as walking "off-stage" as we do in the theater. We don't think of the camera as seeing only what it ought to see at any moment, with something quite different bordering it on every side. We conceive that the camera at any moment is focused on one fragment of immensity. Porter's fugitive wasn't heading toward the end of anything: if he hadn't been killed, he might still be running.

The theater has its own powers, some of which are shared with film, some not (like a centrality in language). But the theater has never been greatly concerned with verity of place and has rarely used such verity successfully. Eisenstein began his career in the theater, and in 1923 he staged a play called *Gas Masks* in the Moscow gasworks, but this production only signaled to him that he belonged in the cinema. Today there are theater productions called "site-specific," but they are often accommodations to the place where the production is being done, rather than works that began by choosing the site as integral. I've seen—

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Jeffrey. *If you think a comedy about AIDS is impossible, try this. A gay New York actor, frightened of infection, shuns sex, or wants to. Understanding, compassion—and wit. (Reviewed 7/31/95)* **Living in Oblivion.** *The travails of low-budget filmmaking, hilariously chronicled by Tom DeCillo, a young writer-director who knows whereof he speaks. (8/21/95)* **My Life and Times with Antonin Artaud.** *Gérard Mordillat directs as if his film were part of his subject's poesy. Sami Frey hauntingly creates the poet-actor-director in the last two years of his mad, anguished life. (8/14/95)* **The Net.** *Sandra Bullock's next step as an ascending star. In this really exciting thriller she plays a computer-program analyst who accidentally discovers a huge computer secret. This gets her in serious trouble. (8/28/95)*—**SK**

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taken part in—productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* on a wooded hill, but the trees and grass never looked real in the beams of the spotlights. The stage lets a play concentrate on matters other than "placeness." Film always has "placeness" at its careless command.

In 1952 André Bazin, one of the most visionary of critics, wrote a two-part essay called "Theater and Cinema" in which he said:

> The stage and the decor where the action unfolds constitute an aesthetic microcosm inserted perforce into the universe but essentially distinct from the Nature that surrounds it. It is not the same with cinema, the basic principle of which is the denial of any frontiers to action.

Inevitably Bazin saw the matter in humanist terms:

> On the screen man is no longer the focus of the drama but will become eventually the center of the universe. The impact of his action may there set in motion an infinitude of waves. The decor that surrounds him is part of the solidity of the world.

I don't know if Bazin ever saw *The Great Train Robbery*; still he describes it. That fleeing passenger set in motion by an infinitude of waves.

Career Note: The slain passenger was played by a salesman turned actor named Max Aronson, who, within a few years, became the first cowboy star, Bronco Billy Anderson. •

Jed Perl on Art

London Grit

Leon Kossoff paints a gritty, untouristy London, and he does it with such wonderful roiling paint surfaces and pearly opalescent grays that even people who know the city fairly well may feel some regret at the things that they have missed. Kossoff is representing England at the Venice Biennale this summer, and in the couple of dozen paintings that hang in the beautiful galleries of the British Pavilion—they include portraits, nudes and landscapes as well as city views—Kossoff gives this shambly, rumpled, humdrum London of his an exhilarating, flowing grace.

Kossoff is a city dweller to his fingertips. He knows that ordinary sights can have a talismanic power precisely because we're seeing them all the time. He uncovers a grayed-down-yet-coruscated 1990s version of the poetry of the everyday in some recent paintings of people rushing to and fro in front of a flower stall at the Embankment Station of the Underground. Another series of paintings, which he's been working on for decades, features the boldly piled-high façade of one of the monuments of English Baroque architecture, Nicholas Hawksmoor's Christchurch, which rises out of the rough-and-ready neighborhood of Spitalfields, not far from the City. In Kossoff's Christchurch paintings, the magnificent formal inventiveness of a masterwork that's just down the street becomes one element in the dynamics of neighborhood life.

Kossoff, who's 69, grew up near Christchurch, and in these paintings one feels how much has gone on around the church, with its dramatically soaring clocktower. Spitalfields has been home to waves of Russian Jewish, Irish and Bengali immigration, and is now being gentrified (the art team of Gilbert and George live around the corner). I mention this neighborhood history because Londoners with whom I looked at the paintings in Venice told me about it, but in a sense it's implicit. The social forces that underlie Kossoff's churning surfaces are familiar to anybody who's spent time in the urban maelstrom, in London or New York or a number of other very big cities.

Kossoff has had two shows in New York and three in Los Angeles in the past twenty years, and these American appearances have left a strong impression. Although he hasn't had all that many more one-man shows in England, Kossoff is a major figure in London, where he's viewed in the context of an ongoing English romantic-expressionist tradition. Around 1950 Kossoff studied with David Bomberg, a painter who's gone into the history books with a few angular Vorticist abstractions from 1912-13 but devoted most of his working life (he died in 1957) to an emotive, painterly realism. The relationship between Bomberg and Kossoff (and Frank Auerbach, another Bomberg student with a flair for London grit) is a case of an influence that's so clear that the younger generation's work almost becomes an organic extension of what the older generation was doing. Some of Kossoff's drawings, with their heavy, jutting lines, might be mistaken for the studies of London architecture that Bomberg was doing fifty years ago. And in Bomberg's early Vorticist works there's an equation between the overall activation of the surface and the overwhelmingness of city life that Kossoff has had the inspiration to bring all the way into the open through his ever-present network of thickly drawn dark lines.

These insistent lines give Kossoff's paintings the magnified clarity of children's book illustrations. Such linear overdetermination is a calculated risk for a painter, and while it can work well in the cityscapes, where it gives contemporary life a once-upon-a-time magic, it rarely pays off in Kossoff's portraits and figure paintings. Not that extreme linear reduction can't work for a figure painter; it's what gives Léger's people their placid monumentality. But Kossoff wants his heavily weighted contours to suggest psychological depth, and although he manages to tell us something about a person, his noses and eyes and mouths have a jotted-down quality that doesn't really pull together the animated surfaces of these tan-and-brick-toned figures.

I think Kossoff is aware of the problem. A recent series of female nudes slumped in a chair are convincingly weighty; the movement from part to part suggests a kind of unrelaxing exhaustion. But the drawing in the figures doesn't give us the specificity that we want from a portrait or a studio nude, and the color in the figures, although nuanced, is a bit oppressive. Sometimes Kossoff's paint surface, which has generally been very, very thick—the artist's equivalent of a geological build-up—suggests muddle rather than depth. Most of the recent heads are too thickly painted; it's mummified flesh. And part of what's exciting about some of the recent London views is that Kossoff is stopping before the surface closes down, so that one feels fluidity as well as weightiness in the handling of the paint.

All of Kossoff's figures have somewhat oversized features and a weary look in their eyes. I've come to think of Kossoff's people as his lovable, superannuated munchkins. That's not necessarily a bad thing: Poussin did munchkins, too. The comparison occurs to one because it occurs to Kossoff, who did loose copies of a Poussin painting, *Cephalus and Aurora*, some years ago. But then Poussin rarely gives his munchkins the starring roles; he sees them as toy people set in overwhelming landscapes. In Kossoff's

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cityscapes, the figures have an echo of that toylike charm that we know from Poussin, and it's apparent that all the hard work that Kossoff devotes to the studio nudes is what gives such summary force to the little people who scurry through a London downpour or hurry home from the underground station. In the Christchurch paintings, the figures moving along the sidewalk don't look at the church, and we find ourselves following their glances even as we look both at them and at the architecture; it makes for a satisfyingly layered experience. Kossoff plays with an interesting idea of likeness-in-unlikeness by describing the architecture and the figures with the same dark lines. There's an equivalence created, so that the building becomes a living, anthropomorphic presence that presses down against the people even as they're pounding the pavement.

Kossoff takes the exact measure of Christchurch's grandeur, but he also likes to bring out the beauty-in-ugliness of a kind of urban architecture that's grown up almost by accident. The Embankment Station and Hungerford Bridge paintings, with their veritable collage of clashing volumes and textures, are as much about the weird fascination of an unplanned environment as are the paintings of New York City's Union Square and 56th Street that Fairfield Porter did in the '70s. (That won't surprise people who've found themselves thinking that there are more than a few similarities between today's sprawling multicultural London and our sprawling multicultural New York.) Kossoff's color is at its best in his cityscapes, more varied and open-ended than in the figures, but even here he sometimes depends too much on surface design.

The children's-illustration flatness gives the cityscapes a nice element of surprise; one feels that Kossoff is allowing himself to have immediate, uncomplicated reactions to a complicated environment. The cityscapes aren't ever blandly reductive, but there's not always enough space to breathe. When Kossoff paints a shadowy area that's supposed to suggest some depth, the color can go dead on him. He likes to squash his perspective, so that diagonals turn into concavities, and the planes that are meant to go back in space lean toward the surface. This spatial indecision, which might be a painterly equivalent of the feeling that moviemakers achieve with their handheld cameras, is something that Kossoff occasionally overplays. His pulsating city is sometimes just a wobbly city.

Especially in the big, recent paintings, Kossoff creates an open, improvisational paint surface that feels as if it's changing before your very eyes. But in Venice, where the British Pavilion happened to be the one place where contemporary painting was presented as a gamble worthy of a large talent, most people seemed to regard Kossoff's work as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition.

For New Yorkers who've watched in recent years as London painters have received a surprisingly large amount of attention—I'm thinking of Lucian Freud, R.B. Kitaj, Howard Hodgkin, Rodrigo Moynihan, Frank Auerbach, as well as Kossoff—the British presence in Venice could look like more of the same. This year's big theme show in Venice, which the Biennale's director, Jean Clair, devoted to the figure in twentieth-century art and gave the title "Identity and Alterity" (that's their English), included work by Kossoff as well as Francis Bacon, Freud and Kitaj. Kitaj, on the basis of his paintings in "Identity and Alterity," was awarded the Biennale's grand prize. In Venice, where the American Pavilion was devoted to a group of video installations by Bill Viola called *Buried Secrets*, one could see an Anglo-American face-off between mind-numbing traditionalism and healthy innovation or between healthy traditionalism and mind-numbing innovation—it all depended on your point of view.

CHRISTCHURCH, SUMMER AFTERNOON, 1994, BY LEON KOSSOFF

Courtesy L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice, California

Yet the English situation was more complicated than the British Pavilion might lead one to imagine, for the British choice was deeply resented by those who regard themselves as London's cutting edge. They had their own Biennale show in the Scuola di San Pasquale, a twenty-or-so-minute walk from the Biennale grounds. (Like Kossoff's exhibition, it was under the auspices of the British Council.) This featured English video and installation art and caused a stir on account of Dinos and Jake Chapman's three-dimensional appropriation of the "Great deeds—against the dead!" plate from Goya's *Disasters of War*. I'm not really sure if the Chapmans meant to declare themselves antiwar or anti-art by reducing the harrowing delicacy of Goya's etching to the camp spectacle of several life-size Ken dolls with their genitals ripped out.

English painters may feel that they're as much at the mercy of anti-painting as anybody else is today, but at the Biennale they looked like practically the only artists alive who care to paint pictures of the world. I don't think that's the case, but there are people in a lot of places, including New York, who do. Painting from London is becoming a popular export. After closing in Venice in September, the Kossoff show travels to the Stedelijk in Amsterdam. A show called "From London," which opened in Edinburgh this summer and includes Kossoff, Bacon, Freud, Auerbach, Kitaj and several other artists, will be traveling to Luxembourg, Lausanne and Barcelona. William Lieberman, the chairman of twentieth-century art at the Metropolitan Museum, has had enough shows of London-based painters (Hodgkin is slated for this fall) to make it seem that whatever the financial advantages of such transatlantic cooperation, he certainly believes that the Brits are the painters for the '90s. A Kossoff retrospective will be mounted at the Tate in 1996. American museum officials who watched as the Lucian Freud retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum in 1994 became the number-one topic at Manhattan dinner parties might want a piece

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of the action, even if it's hard to imagine Kossoff having the knock-'em-dead impact of Sigmund Freud's grandson, who's convinced half the world that he has the last word on how we're living now, not in spite of but on account of his small, cold talent.

English art is no more one thing than American art, but there is something to the idea of a national artistic character, and who can doubt that today the English artistic character has an international appeal? In England, where the cultural bedrock is literary, artists have always been inclined to tell stories or illustrate dramatic moments of the kind that one knows from poetry, and Kossoff's cityscapes have that literary quality, even if what he offers is as pared-down a poetic vignette as "I walked by Christchurch one stormy summer day." There are masterpieces of Romantic poetry that begin with little more. The literary disposition in English art has given it an ambiguous status for much of this century, but the British resistance to the modern idea that the content emerges from the form can look pretty appealing in our postmodern environment. People are right to be fed up with such modern clichés as art-can't-tell-a-story and art-must-look-like-nothing-you've-seen-before. They're right to admire Kossoff. But we're in danger of being swamped by an equally arbitrary set of post-modern clichés, and they do Kossoff no good.

Contemporary English artists may feel that foreigners exaggerate the significance of a national artistic character. But the English themselves are making an assumption about national norms when they insist that an artist's work be understood in terms of some other strong sense of belonging, which in Leon Kossoff's case has to do with his having grown up in a poor London Jewish family. When Waldemar Januszczak, reviewing the Biennale in *The Times* of London on June 18, observed that "you can take a man out of the shtetl but you cannot take the shtetl out of a man," he did not exactly intend a putdown—Januszczak hastened to add that the same could be said of Soutine and Rothko—but he was suggesting that Jewishness might limit an artist's options. He's possibly the only London critic who said as much in print, but there were quite a few people at the Biennale, pro-Kossoff and anti-Kossoff, who were saying more or less the same thing. To Londoners who are tired of all the talk about the Englishness of English art, their comments about the Jewishness of Jewish art are probably a case of giving as good as they get. They have a point. But Jewishness has a way of being posed as a fixed condition, rather than as something that an artist is born into and grows through and then subjects to imaginative transformation. In the face of a rising tribalism, the artist's freedom to choose can look like an out-of-date delusion. It shouldn't.

However Kossoff may choose to regard or disregard his Jewishness, it's unquestionably a factor in the work. It has been observed that Christchurch, for a Jewish boy, must have had the seductive-scary fascination of the unknown. There's probably something to the fact that the student-teacher relationship between Kossoff and Bomberg was a relationship between two London Jews. (Bomberg, who had lived and painted in Palestine in the '20s, would have been perfectly aware of this.) And there is of course much in Kossoff's paintings that brings Soutine to mind. All of this counts—but its significance must be read from the work, not into the work. The connection to Soutine has to do with a lot of artistic factors that have nothing whatever to do with the shtetl. What Kossoff's best recent work brings to mind is the late Francophile Soutine, who gave us one of the century's most original reinterpretations of the tradition of Courbet and Corot. That in turn may relate to Kossoff's oft-remarked affinity with Constable, whose place in English art is in certain respects not unlike that of Courbet in France.

While some in England will regard Jewishness and Englishness as irreconcilable, it may be that in imaginative terms—which are the only terms that really matter to an artist—they are. If English culture is essentially literary, so, too, is Jewish culture. And the English artist who, as an outsider to the modern movement, feels at home with postmodern storytelling may find that his Jewishness fits right into a developing equation. This may help to explain why so many of the painters who are grouped under the rubric of the School of London are Jewish. A year ago, when Kitaj reacted to the critical drubbing that his Tate retrospective received by saying that anti-Semitism was involved, a lot of Americans didn't know what to make of his claims. There was a feeling in New York that he was exaggerating. Now that I've been to Venice and seen how insistently Kossoff's painting is linked with Kossoff's Jewishness, I think Kitaj was onto something.

Whether London's high-cult postmodern publicity machine loves you or hates you, it's definitely something to see it swinging into action. Readers of David Sylvester's essay for the Kossoff show in Venice may find themselves thinking back to Lucian Freud, because Sylvester makes on Kossoff's behalf the same overreaching comparison to Rembrandt that a number of writers made on behalf of Freud. (I may be getting whimsical here, but is Rembrandt, who took such an interest in Amsterdam's Jews, viewed as another element in the School of London's Jewish connection?) The comparison to Rembrandt doesn't say anything useful about either Kossoff or Freud, but qualitative distinctions are irrelevant to a public that accepts Rembrandt's name as part of the back-to-tradition PR mystique. Kossoff, an apparently modest man who just means to mind his own business, may be a little startled to find that his perfectly understandable reluctance to permit studio visits or give interviews is now reported in Garboesque terms.

That Kossoff works in a paint-encrusted studio seems remarkable to some; Rudi Fuchs, the curator of the Stedelijk, writes about this workplace as if it were some kind of shrine. Sylvester quotes Lawrence Gowing as describing Kossoff's painterly surfaces as a "confessional network." Haven't we already had enough mumbo jumbo made out of the fact that there's a lot of paint on somebody's canvases? Sylvester, who knew Giacometti and has recently published a book on him, is so into the existentialism of process that he ends up confusing Kossoff's fine paintings with Giacometti's sublime ones. But then literary types have always mistaken Giacometti for a process-oriented artist, as if his greatness had to do with his changing things so much and not with the perfect accuracy and eloquence of his finished canvases. (If indecision made masterpieces, there would be a lot more of them.)

The point is not more paint or less paint, or more subject matter or less subject matter; it's the appropriateness of what's there. I think Kossoff would agree. Even as he's being hyped as the art world's latest anti-star, his paintings are becoming less mannered, more direct. There have been times, especially in the '60s and '70s, when Kossoff was into paint for its own sake, and the result was overly impastoed surfaces, clotted dark color and a disturbingly webby overlay of gray-white drips. In recent years he's been simplifying his paint-handling, and the result, especially in the newer Christchurch and Embankment flower-stall paintings, is an admirable openness and lightness. These are just about the best canvases that he's ever done.

With the flower stall Kossoff declares his interest in the power of pure color.

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While he's not giving up his gray-and-tan vision of London, he is allowing more and more brightness to seep into the moist atmosphere, and the result is a glinting richness, a buoyancy. Kossoff is moving from not-enough-color to no-color color. This is something that you can learn all about in Venice, where Titian filled big canvases with rainbow-rich grays. Kossoff won't bear comparison with that ultimate Venetian master, but I think it says a good deal about this Englishman's work that it does not look ridiculous in the Venetian context. •

Believers-in-Chief

BY JAROSLAV PELIKAN

The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth with an introduction by Douglas E. Lurton

(Henry Holt and Company, 123 pp., $19.95)

Lincoln's Devotional with an introduction by Carl Sandburg

(Henry Holt and Company, 191 pp., $19.95)

In his farewell address of September 19, 1796, George Washington warned the new Republic that "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." Every American president since Washington has, in one way or another, sought to articulate those "religious principles" for a nation that, from the beginning, has been religiously pluralistic. And every president has invoked the language of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the metaphors of its Bible to carry out his leadership function of instructing and inspiring "a city set on a hill," as Ronald Reagan called the United States, quoting Matthew 5:14.

For at least two of the presidents whose likenesses have made it to Mount Rushmore, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, we possess some printed documentation for the place of the Bible in their thought and devotion, which Henry Holt and Company have reissued in hand-sized format and uniform binding. (There is no indication whether or not the publishers are planning an entire series of forty-two volumes: some of them would probably have to be rather thin.) "Among universal possessions of the American people," Carl Sandburg writes in his introduction to *Lincoln's Devotional*, "are certain speeches and letters of Lincoln that are colored and in part drenched with biblical references and learning." Jefferson's language, to be sure, may more accurately be described as "colored" than as "drenched" with the Bible.

The relation of these two presidents to the Bible represented by these two books is not at all identical, and it could be somewhat misleading to publish them together in a format suggesting that the books both belong to a distinct literary genre. *The Believer's Daily Treasure; or, Texts of Scripture Arranged for Every Day in the Year*, which was published by the Religious Tract Society of London in 1852, contains, under brief chapter headings for each month such as "The True Believer" (January) or "Temptations of the Believer" (September), short passages from the Scriptures, more often from the New Testament but also from the Psalms and the Prophets, as well as quotations from hymns and other religious poetry; but Abraham Lincoln's connection with this little book was a passive one at best. All we really have to go on is the existence of his personal copy, which he inscribed with his signature. "Lincoln was," we are told in Sandburg's introduction, "sparing in the number of books in which he wrote his name."

Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, was active—indeed, in the buzzword of present-day management, he was "pro-active"—in the production of an earlier abridgment, *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth*, in 1804. This he did while he was in the White House. He later described the enterprise as "the work of 2. or 3. nights only at Washington, after getting thro' the evening task of reading the letters and papers of the day." Probably in 1820, back at Monticello, he completed this version, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. Straightedge razor in hand, and with two copies of the New Testament before him, he excised from the text of the Gospels whatever he deemed to be inauthentic, separating "diamonds" from "dung" and eliminating the miraculous elements, including the Resurrection and the references to the unique status of Jesus Christ as Son of God.

Jesus, according to Jefferson, was "the greatest of all the Reformers of the depraved religion of his own country," namely Judaism. He was, Jefferson wrote, "a man, of illegitimate birth, of a benevolent heart, [and an] enthusiastic mind, who set out without pretensions of divinity, ended in believing them, and was punished capitally for sedition by being gibbeted according to the Roman law." Therefore, Jefferson's abridgment of the Gospels closes with the words: "There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." In 1904, the 57th Congress provided for the publication of *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*—to honor the father of the separation of church and state in America.

More interesting and important than the formal literary differences between the two books, however, are what might be termed, with apologies to both presidents, their "theological" differences. Both of them could say of the Bible, in the words of Lincoln, "Take all this book upon reason that you can," but it is hard to imagine Jefferson going on to say, with Lincoln (whatever he might have meant by it), "and the balance on faith." Terms such as "rationalistic" and "mystical," even when they are not being used polemically, are notoriously gelatinous, and they have not been as mutually exclusive historically as many moderns suppose. But insofar as they have some validity as descriptions of "the varieties of religious experience," the first may legitimately be applied to Jefferson and the second (perhaps somewhat less legitimately) to Lincoln.

As an Enlightenment rationalist, Jefferson sought an affinity with Jesus of Nazareth. To find him, however, it was necessary to go beyond "the impious dogmatists, as Athanasius and Calvin," and to go behind the "priestcraft" of institutional Christianity and the orthodoxy of the later dogmas of the church, those "artificial systems" that had been "invented by ultra-Christian sects, unauthorized by a single word ever uttered by him." And more: most of the New Testament itself had obscured Jesus. The "dross of his biographers," the four evangelists, had distorted his real message in the interest

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of aggrandizing his person, and the apostle Paul had subordinated "the life and morals of Jesus of Nazareth" to what he called in 1 Corinthians, "the preaching of the cross" as blood atonement for sin. Consistent with that belief, the "gentleman's library" cataloged in his letter of August 3, 1771, to Robert Skipwith includes the Bible under the category "History, Antient," rather than under "Religion," which does manage to include Epictetus, Cicero and Hume.

The fascinating post-presidential correspondence between Thomas Jefferson, the rationalist Anglican, and John Adams, the Unitarian, ranged over many issues of philosophy, politics and education, but it returned over and over to religion and the New Testament. On October 12, 1813, Jefferson responded to a letter from Adams, expressing his agreement with him: "I think you give a just outline of the theism of the three religions when you say that the principle of the Hebrews was the fear, of the Gentile the honor, and of the Christian the love of God." But on August 15, 1820, he voiced his "creed of materialism" and his vigorous disagreement with the "puzzling letter" that Adams had written on May 12, asserting against Adams that "to talk of *immaterial* existences is to talk of *nothings*, or that there is no god, no angels, no soul." Even apart from his own bowdlerized version of it, Jefferson's Bible was largely concentrated on, or almost confined to, the New Testament, and within the New Testament to the Gospels, and among them to the first three, the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. (Much of the Gospel of John, beginning with its prologue, was far too metaphysical to qualify as authentic in his eyes.)

In what Sandburg calls the "speeches and letters of Lincoln that are colored and in part drenched with biblical references and learning," those portions of the New Testament are likewise prominent, above all perhaps the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. In any public-opinion poll that would inquire about the source of the saying "A house divided against itself cannot stand," Lincoln would get many more votes than the New Testament; but there are also many echoes from the Psalms, Proverbs and the Prophets, and (especially in his reflections on the tragedy and the ambiguity of the Civil War) from the Book of Job. Thus his description of the United States in the striking phrase "the almost chosen people" (which provided the title for one of the finest monographs we have on Lincoln's religious thought) bespeaks both his profound theological sense of American destiny as a new people of Israel and his no less profound theological awareness of the ambiguities attendant upon any such claim. In looking at Lincoln this way, it is difficult not to think of Reinhold Niebuhr and his insights into the irony of American history.

The saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," became, as Sandburg shows, a kind of leitmotiv in Lincoln's religious and political thought. It was his way of giving voice to his profound sense of irony and ambiguity against the true believers of various stripes, including the single-issue abolitionists, who claimed to be better informed about the details of the will of God than they had any right to be. Underlying Lincoln's sense of irony was a sense of reverence in the presence of a divine mystery that did not yield its ultimate secrets either to rationalism or to orthodoxy and therefore called for humility and awe on the part of all mortals.

It does seem regrettable that very little of this historical, literary and theological setting comes through in the skimpy introductions to these two books. (A little of it does in Sandburg's on Lincoln, almost none of it in Douglas E. Lurton's on Jefferson.) And, speaking of irony, that particular difference between the two men should have been, if anything, the reverse, because there has been considerable research on Jefferson's versions of the Gospels, published by Dickinson W. Adams as *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels*. By contrast, even the jacket blurb for *Lincoln's Devotional* is obliged to acknowledge that "it is unknown whether he carried the book with him." Books like these cannot be reprinted often, and so, while they were at it, the publishers should have provided present-day readers, who are separated from Abraham Lincoln by over a century and from Thomas Jefferson by two centuries, with a much more substantial summary of the historical context of each. For it can no longer be taken for granted, if indeed it ever could be, that such readers will know enough either about the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century, not to say about the Bible whether Jewish or Christian, to make sense of what they are reading here.

At the end of the twentieth century, when our political discourse is once again being "colored and in part drenched with the Bible," for good or ill or some of both, reflection on these two books unavoidably raises deeper questions about the place of the Bible and religious faith in public life today, not only in its imagery and rhetoric but also in its substance. Is there some inconsistency when we (myself included) demonize the "religious right" and idealize Martin Luther King? After all, they both base themselves on the Bible and they both use the pulpit as a political platform. And there is, moreover, also a "religious left," which for generations found a voice in much of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism and can now be heard in at least some versions of Liberation Theology.

Unless one is prepared to maintain that it is "ideology" when you do it and it is "principle" when I do it, we need to reopen some of the fundamental questions raised by Walter Lippmann in 1955 in his *Essays in the Public Philosophy* and ask how a religion of authority, which is what all biblical faith is in some fashion or other, communicates its moral values and even its religious insights to those who do not or cannot accept that authority. And we need to ask ourselves this, even if there are those who can no longer share Washington's conviction that "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

Philosophically, this problem has long been the realm of "natural theology" and (pardon the expression) "natural law." It was a universalized "natural theology" that Jefferson espoused, and that he found supremely articulated in "the life and morals of Jesus of Nazareth." He did not share the belief of orthodox Christianity that Jesus Christ was, in the words of the Nicene Creed, "God from God ... true God from true God"; but with those who confessed that dogma he did share, and they with him, at least as much of "the life and morals of Jesus of Nazareth" as could be known and accepted and obeyed without any recourse to supernatural authority or supernatural grace.

In all three of the "monotheisms of the Book"—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—there has been a continuing tradition of distinguishing between those doctrines and practices that are binding upon an adherent of the faith (and therefore may be identified as "revealed") and those that make a claim upon everyone irrespective of belief or even lack of belief (and that therefore may be called "natural"). In medieval thought—which is the tradition I know best across the boundaries of the three faiths (and which I know better than I do American thought)—Maimonides, Aquinas and Averroes all operated with some such distinction and, despite their profound disagreements about the particularities of revealed doctrine, they had a considerable body of natural morality and even natural theology in common.

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But the use of natural law to justify everything from slavery to the divine right of kings to male supremacy in a patriarchal society has done much to discredit it; and the flurry of debate over it in the media during the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas indicated how problematic it is for many thoughtful observers and how nervous it makes them to hear it mentioned. Still, as Peter Steinfels has recently suggested, there would now be widespread consensus, say, on the thesis that rape is always wrong regardless of circumstances—even if my tradition says it is alright, even if my society and its courts condone it, even if my private conscience approves of it. That consensus about rape is a reflection of the Bible, among other sources, despite the ambiguity of certain biblical passages. Now how does someone who interprets the Bible as authoritative, even from a Jewish or a Christian pulpit, declare its message on the question of rape as one that is no less binding upon someone for whom the Bible is not authoritative? Substitute "abortion" for "rape" in those sentences, and you get a sense of the complexity of the problem of the Bible and the public order.

From another perspective, the publication of these two books also raises the issue denoted by the use of the word "devotional" in the title of the Lincoln volume. For only the most cynical of observers would maintain that all the references to God and to prayer in the speeches, letters and diaries of American presidents—from the unforgettable picture of George Washington on his knees at Valley Forge to the moving words of Bill Clinton at the dedication of the Holocaust Museum, one of his finest hours—have been nothing but window dressing for purposes of political manipulation. The partial studies that have been published about the devotional life of various presidents provide a fascinating spectrum of religious experiences and expressions.

Under the date of March 28, for example, *Lincoln's Devotional* quotes Psalm 27:5, "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock." Even a party-line Freudian, for whom prayer is "projection" and the meaning and prospects of religious faith come under the heading of "the future of an illusion," must come to terms with the subjective certainty, if not the objective reality, of a relation to the Almighty on the part of one who carries the burdens of the presidential office "in the time of trouble." And when, for August 3, it quotes Romans 7:23, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law

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of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," it speaks of the moral conflict, and of the repentance, in which, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the life of faith, also for a president, is continually involved.

If war is much too serious a matter to be entrusted to the military, then the Bible is too serious a matter (and too interesting a book) to be left to the theologians and the scholars, or even to the believers. As David Jeffrey put it in his preface to *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*: "Contemporary readers of English literature for whom the Bible itself remains a closed book, even a 'dead' book, continue to 'hear' it persistently, inter alia. Whether or not the Bible's literary presence comes to be reckoned with cogently is a question upon which, it seems, much else depends—even, perhaps, the probable shelf life of a substantial body of our most accomplished literature." It is not too much to add that upon this question also depends a significant measure of our ability to come to terms with our common history as a people.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN is Sterling Professor of History at Yale and president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

When All Men Were Equal

BY EUGENE D. GENOVESE

Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936 edited by Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov and Oleg V. Khlevniuk translated by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick

(Yale University Press, 276 pp., $25)

In 1969, Viacheslav Molotov released eighty-six letters written to him by Josef Stalin between 1925 and 1936. Seventy-one of those letters, which now appear in English in *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, were written between 1925 and 1930, years of bitter intraparty struggles and the onset of the bloody collectivization of agriculture and forced-march industrialization. The Bolsheviks were building "socialism in one country," as hopes waned for Communist revolutions in Western Europe and China. As might be expected, Stalin's letters contain only hints of the atrocities that were mounting during the 1920s and rose to a horrifying magnitude in the 1930s. No doubt Molotov winnowed his collection carefully, and he included none of his own letters to Stalin; and to add to the frustration, there are no letters for 1928 and 1934, both years of particular interest. The year 1934 saw a concerted attempt in the party to rein Stalin in, as well as the Kirov assassination. It offered a foretaste of the sweeping purges to come.

Most of the letters were handwritten. Some were written in obvious haste, others were carefully crafted. To the extent that Stalin trusted anyone, Molotov was the man, and so Stalin wrote about state and party issues frankly. Still, these few letters are only a tease. They reveal just enough to fire our fancy and then leave us to stew. And the actual texts of the letters take up less than half the pages in the book, though their value is considerably enhanced by Lars Lih's long and illuminating introduction and annotations, which contain valuable additions from other correspondence and documents.

Lih's introduction offers a penetrating interpretation of Stalin, the political leader and the man, and Robert C. Tucker adds a thoughtful foreword. Stalin emerges as a man whose acute intelligence, political and administrative talent and boundless energy matched his ruthlessness. He won the allegiance of many able party leaders at least partly because he offered the most cogent analyses of the political and economic problems of the day. These letters testify to his effort, generally although not always successful, to face the hard facts others resisted. Stalin's painstaking attention to the smallest details is particularly impressive.

The letters show, as Lih insists, that Stalin by no means turned his back on the world revolution. In particular, he continued to work for a revolutionary policy in China. A heavy dose of cynicism may well have gone into Stalin's strategic calculations, but it remains difficult to separate Stalin's cynicism from his commitment. For, much as Stalin came to identify the cause of Soviet socialism with his own person, so, by extension, did he personify the cause of world revolution. As Lih writes, "All in all, Stalin comes out of the letters with his revolutionary credentials in good order."

The letters support Lih's argument that Stalin worked with an "antibureaucrat scenario" that was predicated on the Soviet Union's coming into possession of everything that was necessary to effect a socialist industrialization. Hence, Stalin regarded every setback and failure as evidence of bureaucratic opposition to, or lack of faith in, the party's program. Before long, he was attributing every failure to "wrecking," that is, willful sabotage by class enemies who had insinuated themselves into the state apparatus, especially economic management, and into the party itself. His endless bloody purges were not merely struggles for personal power, they were extensions of the class war.

Contrary to his reputation, he displayed a fiery temper that sometimes transformed towering hatreds and vendettas into political mistakes. The arrest and trial of "bourgeois" specialists in 1928, for example, sent the country reeling; but it was only the beginning of a prolonged process of mutilation. In 1930, forty-eight specialists in the meat industry were made scapegoats for an industrial failure, tried in secret and executed. Trials and executions of engineers and others followed. Then and afterwards, Stalin seems to have convinced himself that the accused were guilty, even when he ordered the tortures that provoked their confessions.

Stalin saw every failure as a betrayal, no matter how loyally or even heroically the comrades on the ground may have performed. If a factory or collective farm did not meet a quota assigned by party leaders, its managers were saboteurs or men who had grown lazy and corrupt. From the beginning, factories, farms and procurement agencies could not meet quotas, follow directives and stay within the law all at the same time. They improvised as best they could and, in effect, placed the interests of their own sector above that of what the party regarded as the general interest. In 1926, Stalin exploded: "The virtual impunity of these obvious criminals is grist for the mill of the Nepmen and other enemies of the working class.... This can't be tolerated any further if we don't want to be captured by these bastards who claim to 'accept' our directives but really mock us." The party had to make an example of them. Throughout his career, Stalin exhibited an utter disregard for human

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life and an obsession with the "Cause." Like countless radicals before and after, he never doubted that the party's program served mankind, but he had little time for the lives of individual men and women.

To the day he died, Stalin remained a revolutionary leveler who despised the bureaucracy that he could not do without. Did any leader in modern history do remotely as much as Stalin to rein in the privileged, bring down the haughty and create such marvelous opportunities for the upward mobility of mediocrity? At first blush it may appear absurd to view Stalin as an egalitarian of any kind. He comes through in these letters, however, as a sincere champion of radical egalitarianism. True, he mocked the Marxist-Leninist vision of a classless society by imposing a dictatorship based upon a wide array of privileges and de facto social stratification; but Stalin hated elitist pretensions no less than Mao Tse-tung, and no less than Mao he constantly provided new and (to some) surprising evidence of a readiness to shoot those who settled into a life of comfort and privilege. He especially praised the "moral aspect" of Lenin's exhortations to create a genuinely revolutionary leadership. Lenin, according to Stalin, "wanted to get to the point where the country contained not a single bigwig, no matter how highly placed, about which the man in the street could say, 'that one is above control.'"

The tragedy of the Soviet experience lay right there. Stalin distrusted all elites and, most particularly, the former tsarist bureaucrats and "bourgeois specialists" who crossed over and joined the party or at least served the Soviet state. He sorely needed them to build a socialist economy, but his distrust and his resentment easily passed into a self-defeating wrath. He could not wait to get rid of them, and get rid of many of them he did. This is not surprising. Every time something went wrong, as it usually did, the reason had to be found not in real difficulties or in the socialist system itself, the soundness of which could not be questioned, but in the subversion that one had to expect from class enemies who yearned for a counterrevolution. The sooner the party overcame its misplaced tolerance of error—that is, its concessions to a rotten bourgeois sentimentality—and the sooner it ruthlessly purged these contemptible wreckers, the sooner it could get on with the business of building socialism.

Thus Stalin railed at "'Communists' who have burrowed into our organization like thieves and have maliciously helped to wreck the cause of the workers' state." Thus he congratulated the Politburo for "smashing the nest ... of bourgeois politicians ensconced in Gosplan, the Central Statistical Administration, and so on. Hound them out of Moscow and put in their place young fellows, our people, Communists." And the devil of it was that no one could ever be sure whether responsibility for a failure did not, in fact, rest with saboteurs, corrupt officials and time-serving imbeciles.

The party planners had at their disposal the brilliant insights of high theory, but they were lacking the vital mundane information that only a market structure could provide. The managers had to fulfill the plan in the teeth of endless shortages and miscalculations, to patch things together as best they could. If the job got done—however it got done—they were on their way to (momentary) fame and fortune. If the job did not get done, they were on their way to the Gulag or a firing squad.

Armed with a first-rate mind, Stalin knew much more about the world than all except his best biographers usually give him credit for. But his intelligence and his knowledge availed little when the system revealed itself as essentially unworkable. The party's vision of a New World was sustained by dialectical reason, and its materialist philosophy could not be criticized. Its political economy and social theory were scientifically grounded. Historical law guaranteed the triumph of socialism. "The Party makes mistakes, but the Party is never wrong": so said the slogan of communist parties everywhere. No one seemed to notice, as Stalin, a former divinity student, doubtless did notice, that the party was appropriating, transforming and corrupting St. Cyprian's dictum that "outside the Church there is no salvation."

Increasingly, the party of the working class became the party of the central committee, and then of the Politburo, and then of its all-wise leader: "The Leader of All Progressive Mankind," as he came to be called. The "Cause" became identified with a single leader. To fail the party meant to fail Stalin, who evinced nothing so clearly as an inclination to play the God of Wrath. Under such conditions, failure was sin, as Stalin noted in outbursts such as this one, in 1930: "There can be no doubt that Kalinin has sinned." And more often than not, his opponents did not commit just any sin. They committed a sin against the Holy Ghost, the one sin Jesus pronounced beyond repentance and redemption.

No political leader in modern history, perhaps no political leader in world history, displayed so little human feeling. Hitler at least retained a small measure

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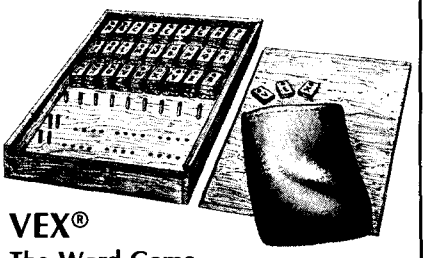

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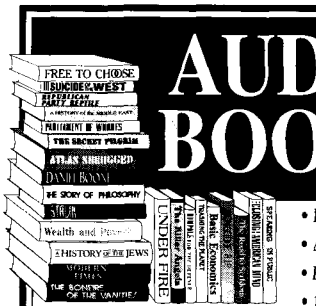

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of sentimentality toward old party comrades; when he purged the Nazi stormtroopers, he wailed that the execution (or forced suicide) of Ernst Röhm made that day the most painful day of his life. If Stalin ever had such a moment (which we may doubt), he kept it well hidden. Stalin provided all the evidence that sane men need about where the belief that "the personal is the political" sooner or later must end.

Few tyrants so thoroughly relished revenge as a dish best eaten cold. In 1930, Stalin zeroed in on L.M. Kinchuk and G.K. (Sergo) Ordzhonikidze for fouling up their assignments: "Do people pity Kinchuk? But the cause should be pitied even more. Do they not want to offend Sergo? But what about the cause—can such an important and serious matter be offended?" When serious financial difficulties developed, he proposed his favorite solution: "Definitely shoot two or three dozen wreckers from these apparaty, including several dozen common cashiers."

Stalin knew that shooting people, while enjoyable, does not solve problems however much it may create favorable conditions for solutions. The solution, he said explicitly, lay in training "honest Communists" to take over the administration of the economy and, indeed, of all social life. The building of socialism required ruthless and incorruptible Communists who tolerated no excuses and had the will (and the infallible ideology) to overcome all obstacles. Stalin, the seminarian turned revolutionary, did not doubt that man had the power to storm heaven and make himself the only god that matters. The tension in Marxism-Leninism's combination of an allegedly scientific doctrine of the inevitability of a communist victory with an extreme voluntarism was never resolved. How could it be resolved? It could not be made a subject for discussion. In all this Stalin proved himself a good Marxist and Leninist, who could plead that he was merely finding the indispensable means to effect the ends that his predecessors had espoused.

He did find honest Communists, real Bolsheviks, dedicated revolutionaries, and he did open the road to power to them, sort of. Heroic efforts impelled a forced collectivization and an astonishingly rapid industrialization that transformed a wretched country into a world power strong enough to defeat the Nazi onslaught. The costs included an unprecedented human carnage, which the Soviets and their foreign admirers justified as the price necessary to end oppression and establish the foundations for a just and equitable social order. But it was not to be. One after another, the Communist New Men and New Women, worn down by impossible demands and unattainable goals, looked very much like the old time-servers. No amount of revolutionary élan and selfless dedication could overcome the weaknesses inherent in an economy that stifled initiative and productivity and sacrificed economic efficiency to unattainable social goals.

The dénouement came after Stalin's death, when a more relaxed regime had to make good on its endless promises to "overtake and surpass" the capitalist countries. And that dénouement unearthed the terrible truth that socialism did not work. The social-democratic and labor parties that promised an economically efficient and democratic socialism fared no better. They may be credited with many things, but a viable socialist society is the one thing they were never able to deliver.

For all his crimes, Stalin died in bed. He always boasted that no one could fool him, and up to a point he had reason to crow. Yet the one thing that he seemed to covet was lasting fame as the great architect of the social system of the future. He died before it all crumbled, but he was always beset by fears. Since he trusted no one in life, how could he trust anyone in death? The men around him may well have been largely his own creatures (that depends upon how you read them), but he had little faith in them. He was too serious a Marxist to cry, *Après moi le déluge*, but late in life he lashed out at the "fools" who would inherit his mantle. How on earth would the Soviet Union survive their weaknesses and their blunders?

The illusions of Stalinism long predated Stalin, and they have never completely abated. When the ramparts of heaven do not yield to human assault, and the latest version of the Cause lies in ashes, the refrain returns: we failed for this reason or that, and we were betrayed from within. Next time we will be thorough and leave nothing to chance. Whatever went wrong, the Cause will ever remain a shining beacon to future generations. That much cannot, must not, be questioned.

A master psychologist, Stalin knew, as few others have ever known, how to attach a man's strength and how to manipulate his weakness. He regarded most people as fools, and he knew how to prey upon them with supreme cunning and heartlessness. No one would ever fool Stalin, and perhaps no one, with the possible exception of Hitler on the eve of the Nazi invasion, ever did fool him. But Stalin fooled himself. He was utterly deluded about the inevitable outcome of the great struggle on which his movement had embarked. Let us pray that we shall not see his likes again.

JOSEF STALIN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Probably, we shall not; and his "ism," too, is probably over. But its mentality lives on, however much its ravages are restricted by circumstances. It has been with us since ancient times, espousing ostensibly noble ideals of human greatness, all the while driven by fierce hatreds spawned by the impossibility of every attempt at self-deification. It has taken wantonly cruel political form whenever the gnostic vision of a man-centered universe has called upon masses of men to storm heaven and become like the gods.

Nikolai Bukharin, leader of the party's right wing, criticized the Stalinist majority in the Central Committee and said: "Doubt everything." Stalin, the true believer, was incensed. That slogan, Stalin wrote in 1929, "was deployed by Marx to destroy capitalism and overthrow the bourgeois government," whereas Bukharin, by invoking it against the party's leadership, "completely violates the Marxist method of dialectics." Here, as always, Stalin preached "class truth," which was a precursor, *mutatis mutandis*, of what postmodernists have come to call "situational truth."

In dealing with his underlings, Stalin showed that he really was no fool. The Father of Political Correctness rallied to his Cause everyone from the most vile opportunist to the most selfless idealist. He knew that the opportunists, having whored for him, would whore for his enemies, and he knew that the revolutionaries, in words he once used for the Western communists, would "swallow anything." He knew, in short, that he could never trust the men who carried out his orders. It was common sense that dictated a policy of shooting them after they had served their purposes and replacing them with a new wave. He eyed them all warily, for idealists, being prone to delude themselves, were as likely as opportunists to ruin everything.

Credit where credit is due: a true leveler, Stalin did more than any man in world history to make sure that society constantly opened room at the top for every aspirant with a raised consciousness. He turned every political position into a lifetime job (when he did not end the job with a bullet to the head). A true idealist, he gave the world an unforgettable taste of life in a society dedicated to the elimination of all oppressive elites, all slavish respect for tradition, all concessions to what Marx called "the old crap."

However much Stalin's political talent and iron will attached people to his person, the best of those who rallied to him did so in loyalty to the cause that his person embodied. No matter how great his crimes, he was leading the Soviet peoples and all progressive mankind toward the promised land. He skillfully assimilated to himself the myth of the good tsar who had to contend with bad officials. Thus the people referred to the worst of the purges as the *Yezhovschina*—the terrible days of Yezhov, the head of the secret police—and never as the *Stalinschina*. When Boris Pasternak met Ilya Ehrenburg on the street and expressed his horror at the arrest of innocent people, he put it this way: "Ilya, someone must tell Stalin!"

As for Nikolai Yezhov, who seems, from a clinical standpoint, to have been criminally insane, Stalin dispatched him as he had dispatched his predecessor when the time came to halt the latest purge. When Westerners asked Stalin about Yezhov, he replied that Yezhov was a bad man who actually persecuted innocent people. Molotov himself admitted that Stalin, just before he died, was preparing another purge: "I think that if he had lived another year or so, I might not have survived, but in spite of that, I have believed and believe that he carried out tasks so colossal and difficult that no one of us then in the party could have fulfilled them."

The identification of the man with the cause was greatly strengthened by the nationalistic identification with Mother Russia during World War II. Consider Marshall K. K. Rokossovsky, who emerged from the war in the highest echelons of the Polish and then Soviet defense ministries. In the late 1930s, in the purge of the military elite, Stalin had him arrested and sent to the Gulag. In 1941, with Moscow in danger of falling to a Nazi blitzkrieg, Stalin needed Rokossovsky's superior military talent, and Rokossovsky suddenly found himself in Moscow at a meeting with Stalin and the general staff. Stalin greeted him warmly, and Rokossovsky did not skip a beat. He took up his post and turned in the performance expected of him.

In his final sermon to the last party Congress that he would ever address, Stalin expounded his grand vision, exhorting his comrades to fulfill their holy obligation to the Cause. Preaching from the Revelation of St. Vladimir, Stalin brought the Congress to its feet with a prophecy that he doubtless expected would put the final touches to his bid for immortality. It has fallen to us, he exulted, to create "a radiant future for the peoples."

EUGENE D. GENOVESE is the author most recently of *The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War* (University of Missouri Press).

Power to the People

BY MICHAEL LIND

The Populist Persuasion: An American History by Michael Kazin

(Basic Books, 381 pp., $24)

Of the contributions of the United States to the lexicon of political discourse, the word "populism" is among the most important. The term itself seems to have been coined in Ohio by a correspondent for *The Columbus Dispatch* in 1892 as the adjective corresponding to the recently founded People's Party, which soon became known, and is remembered, as the Populist Party. Had "populist" been limited to its original meaning, it would now be as quaint and unfamiliar a word as "silverite" or "Granger"; but "populism" survived the ephemeral People's Party, for better and for worse.

The term acquired two new meanings. It is often used to refer to an enduring American tradition of political thought, with which the anti-Federalists, the Jeffersonians and the Jacksonians have been identified. Thus broadly defined, populism is identified with a diffuse but relatively stable collection of principles and prejudices that have endured for more than two centuries. (Some historians trace them back to radicalism in Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.) Chief among the themes of this populism are a nostalgia for an agrarian society, coupled with a hostility toward urban and industrial civilization; an obsession with economic panaceas, usually involving some scheme for reducing the control of credit by private bankers; an emphasis on equality, substantive as well as formal, among members of "the people," thought of as a homogeneous, moral community; a

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conspiratorial interpretation of politics; and an enthusiasm for various forms of direct democracy, which in different eras has taken the form of support for the direct election of U.S. senators, initiative and recall, and term limits for state and federal representatives.

In this sense, populism is an ancient and perdurable American political tradition. But the other new meaning of populism construes it simply as a synonym for egalitarianism. This latter meaning is exceedingly vague, which may account for its increasing popularity; and this enterprise of draining "populism" of specific historical connotations is extremely useful. By declaring themselves to be populists, politicians of every political persuasion can identify themselves with the needs and the values of "the people," who are the opposite of what used to be called "the interests" and nowadays is known as "the new class" or "the elite" (especially the cultural one). Liberal and left thinkers, for their part, are inclined to use the term "populist" when they mean "egalitarian," for the simple reason that "populist" has wholesome Norman Rockwell connotations in the public mind, whereas "egalitarian" summons up images of Robespierre, if not Lenin. The term "nationalist" would probably serve the left best, except that the left has never really been comfortable with the term or the reality that it denotes.

In his new book, Michael Kazin provides a rich and thoughtful account of the evolution of populist rhetoric on the left and the right in American politics in the past century—an account that can only increase skepticism about the ability of conventional liberals to counter the populism of conservatives with a populism of their own. The "populist persuasion," as Kazin defines it, is considerably more inclusive than the Jefferson-Jackson tradition of political ideology. It has room for groups quite different from the constituents of the Populist Party: Progressive-era labor activists and socialists, Protestant prohibitionists, right-wing Catholic corporatists, trade-union liberals, cold war conservatives, the New Left and the religious right. "I do not contend that my subjects were populists, in the way they were unionists or socialists, Protestants or Catholics, liberal Democrats or conservative Republicans," Kazin writes, anticipating the criticism that he has shoe-horned together fundamentally disparate phenomena. "Rather, my premise is that all these people employed populism as a flexible mode of persuasion."

American populist rhetoric, Kazin argues, blends two traditions, "the pietistic impulse issuing from the Protestant Reformation," and "the secular faith of the Enlightenment, the belief that ordinary people could think and act rationally, more rationally, in fact, than their ancestral overlords." Protestant revivalism and radical democracy were not always allied. The high-toned Federalist Party allied itself with Protestant evangelicals in the attempt to smear President Jefferson and his Democrats as anti-Christian infidels and tools of the Bavarian Illuminati. Alexander Hamilton wanted to sponsor a "Christian Constitutional Society" as an auxiliary of the Federalists, rather as the Republican Party helped with the seed money for the Christian Coalition.

Pietism and republicanism were united, though, in the Populist Party and in William Jennings Bryan, its perennial presidential candidate. A spokesman for agrarian radicals suffering from the worldwide depression that afflicted farmers in the late nineteenth century, Bryan combined what are now thought of as "liberal" concerns (regulation of the railroads, child labor laws) with reactionary obsessions. His last act on the public stage was to prosecute John T. Scopes, a teacher who taught evolution, in the famous "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee.

Were the Populists on the right or the left? They probably should be located (in my view, not Kazin's) on the anti-modern right; the Populist Party was the American equivalent of the parochial and often anti-Semitic Peasants' Parties of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Europe. But the marriage, in a prairie church, of creationism and anti-capitalist reform was not to last. "The Gilded Age alliance between comfortable evangelicals and tribunes of the horny-handed had always depended on a common foe," Kazin writes.

From the 1870s to the 1890s, the idea that monopolists were robbing Americans of their economic independence and their Christian virtue had brought together activists who would otherwise have mistrusted each other's motives and interests. When the People's Party made its priorities clear, evangelicals reasserted their traditional judgment: only those who put the Savior first could save the nation.

While trade-unionists, progressive reformers and socialist radicals put forth their alternate schemes for bettering the lot of the common man, the evangelicals concentrated on moral crusades, of which the most important was Prohibition. To be sure, in their war on "the Liquor Trust" the prohibitionists employed the language of the older American populism. Unlike the present-day Christian right's alliance with business-class reactionaries, the prohibitionists of an earlier time, according to Kazin, "abhorred the discourse of turn-of-century conservatism, with its fear of mass democracy and assumption that human nature was unchangeable. In most states, Prohibition voters could also be counted on to back campaigns against government corruption and for corporate regulation and woman suffrage."

Prohibitionism was easily allied, moreover, with white supremacy. Kazin notes that Anti-Saloon League propaganda often contained "items blaming cheap gin for inspiring black field hands to rape white women." The Protestant evangelicals viewed bibulous German, Irish and Slavic immigrants in the big cities with distrust, and the immigrants, in turn, perceived prohibitionism as a particularly repellent form of nativism. The victory of the prohibitionist cause in 1917, when Congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment, ultimately owed more to anti-German feeling than to moral suasion; German-American brewers were attacked as agents of the Kaiser, undermining American strength and morale. Paraphrasing Randolph Bourne's dictum that "war is the health of the state," Kazin writes: "Enforced Americanism turned out to be the health of moral reform." But this brief coincidence of evangelical fervor and mainstream nationalism did not last, though the Eighteenth Amendment was not repealed until December 1933; the crusades that Protestant fundamentalists have followed since the downfall of prohibition, like creationism and the criminalization of abortion, have not been popular, much less populist.

In his discussion of the American labor movement and Catholic populism in the interwar period, Kazin risks stretching the definition of populism to the breaking point. Urban, industrial workers, particularly those who were immigrants, had little in common with the Anglo-American farmers and "mechanics" who constituted the "yeomen" or "producers" in the Jefferson-Jackson tradition. Still, as Kazin shows in his discussion of CIO propaganda in the 1940s labor leaders felt it necessary to portray their movement as a crusade for "the Common Man of this earth" rather than for a special interest or the proletariat (a term with communist overtones).

Many of Kazin's subsidiary arguments about the rhetorical strategy of early twentieth-century American labor are persuasive, but his discussion is muddled by a persistent use of populism in its third and vague sense, to mean "egalitarianism." While all populists may be

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egalitarians, not all egalitarians are populists. Labor leaders, surely, could speak of "the worker" or "the common man" without necessarily betraying the influence, conscious or unconscious, of the distinctive tradition of Andrew Jackson or William Jennings Bryan. Samuel Gompers, a Jewish immigrant from England, was first influenced by Marx. Similarly, many American industrial workers were immigrants more influenced by European socialism than by the local Jacksonian tradition celebrating small farmers and artisans. The attempt to make Old Hickory rather than Marx the grandfather of the AFL-CIO exaggerates, if it does not invent, the continuity between nineteenth-century farmer-and-mechanic populism and the twentieth-century liberalism of organized labor.

This is not a problem with Kazin's discussion of conservative populism, for the simple reason that American populist conservatives, unlike "common man" progressives, really do share many of the themes of "the populist persuasion," from the nostalgia for small-town life to the theory of history as the work of conspiracies by communists, secular humanists or "the cultural elite." "Until the 1940s, conservative populism was an oxymoron," Kazin notes. "From the Gilded Age through the Great Depression, the hallmark of mainstream conservatism had been its support for unregulated capitalism and of private riches honestly obtained." During the cold war, however, conservatives were able "to marry two impulses that had seldom been joined: the critique, memorably voiced by Andrew Jackson, of high government officials who secretly abet their foreign friends and the evangelicals' persistent horror of moral anarchy fostered by a cosmopolitan elite."

Kazin performs a great service by showing one of the roots of postwar conservatism in the Catholic populism of Father Charles E. Coughlin, the fiery radio priest of the 1930s. Though Coughlin was ultimately discredited by his anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism and isolationism, he proved that Irish-American and German-American Catholics could use populist rhetoric and 100-percent Americanism as well as native-born Anglo-American Protestants. Kazin convincingly shows the influence on cold war conservatism of the right-wing Catholicism of the 1930s and 1940s.

> Catholic organizations constituted the largest and best-financed—as well as most uncompromising—battalion in the anti-Communist movement. Its generals were such powerful hierarchs as Cardinal Spellman of New York and Archbishop (later Cardinal) Cushing of Boston. Its troops were priests and laypersons who distributed pamphlets for the Catholic Information Society, started Mindszenty Circles (named for the imprisoned cardinal of Hungary) and discussion groups affiliated with the Knights of Columbus Crusade for the Preservation and Promotion of American Ideals, organized chapters of the Catholic War Veterans, contributed articles to *Our Sunday Visitor* and the *Brooklyn Tablet*, marched in Loyalty Day parades, and denounced union officials who strayed too close to the CP line.

In foreign communists and their American allies and dupes, Protestant evangelicals and Catholics who had been on opposing sides during the prohibitionist crusade found a common enemy and joined in a populist alliance. To the communist threat, two others were added: big government and the intellectual class in the academy and the media. All three were described in traditional populist terms as seeking to subvert the American republic from within.

The success of the anti-communist right can partly be explained by the fact that its analysis was plausible. The Soviet Union was a threat; there were Soviet spies and fellow travelers in the American elite; government was expanding enormously (more as a result of World War II than of the New Deal); and the traditional censorship of the publishing industry and the mass media by prudish

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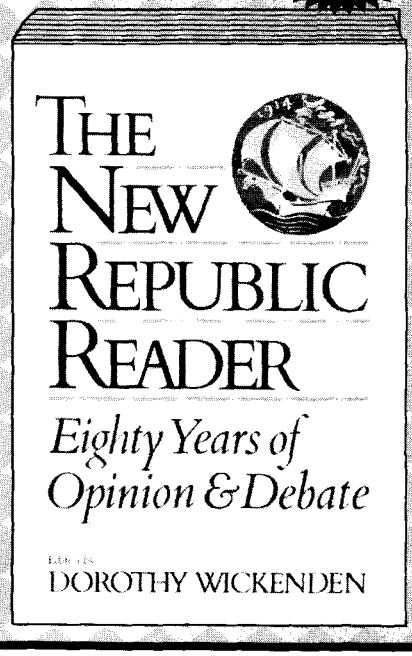

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Protestant and Catholic clergy was diminishing as a result of urbanization and liberal judicial rulings. Even more important, the cold war right accomplished what the Popular Front left of the New Deal era attempted but failed to do. It adumbrated a popular nationalism in which white Americans of all faiths and ancestries could feel at home.

The Anglo-American Protestant nativism of the turn of the century had been enlarged into a new pan-white and "Judeo-Christian" nativism, which included in its ranks non-Protestants such as Patrick Scanlan (editor of the *Brooklyn Tablet*) and the Jewish journalist George Sokolsky, who wrote for the Hearst papers, linked Alger Hiss's alleged treason with the toleration by Hollywood of Ingrid Bergman's affair with Roberto Rossellini, and thus anticipating, by four decades, Newt Gingrich's invocation of Woody Allen's marital troubles as proof of the liberal indifference to family values. And the fusion of hinterland populism and Catholic anti-communism found its symbol, of course, in Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Disgust with the recycling of populist demonology by the new cold war right led Peter Viereck, a remarkable conservative intellectual, to abandon the movement in the 1950s. In *The Populist Persuasion*, which Kazin does not cite, Viereck explained the appeal of right-wing populism to "ethnic" Americans:

> Transtolerance is the form that xenophobia takes when practiced by a *xeno* [italics in original]. Transtolerant McCarthyism is partly a movement of recent immigrants who present themselves (not so much to the world as to themselves) as a 200 percent hate-the-foreigner movement. And by extension: Hate "alien" ideas.... [I]t is the Irishman's version of Mick-baiting and a strictly kosher anti-Semitism. It very sincerely champions against anti-Semites "that American Dreyfus, Roy Cohn"; simultaneously it glows with the same mob emotions that in all previous or comparable movements have been anti-Semitic.

Dissolve to Ralph Reed, who recently observed that "much of the new immigration from Latin America and the Pacific Basin tends to be conservative, pro-family and devoutly religious. They're our voters."

Kazin's discussion of conservative populism is curiously truncated. He has little to say about the South, which is surprising, since the South has the longest experience of various alliances and mergers between populism and conservatism. Liberalism and populism have sometimes been allied in the South, as in the careers of the Texas governors "Pa" and "Ma" Ferguson, or that of "Big Jim Folsom" of Mississippi. More often, Southern politics has taken the form of a battle between an oligarchic right and a populist right which, for all its "progressive" economic egalitarianism, has been committed to white supremacy and an authoritarian polity. Without a discussion of the Dixie populism of figures such as "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, Tom Watson, J.K. Vardaman and Theodore Bilbo, Kazin's discussion seems incomplete.

Kazin's interesting book is the newest contribution to a perennial debate among left and liberal thinkers about whether populists provide progressives with a usable past. During the New Deal era, historians such as John D. Hicks had written kindly of Bryan's legions as constructive precursors of needed reforms. But in his essay on "The Folklore of Populism," published in 1955, Richard Hofstadter attacked that interpretation. He portrayed the Populists of the 1890s as parochial and anti-Semitic cranks with primitive economic ideas. Hofstadter's criticism amounted to a revival of the negative assessment of the Populists by Theodore Roosevelt (who called them "rural tories") and Woodrow Wilson, who declared of the Bryan Democrats, "Most of our reformers are retro-reformers. They want to hale us back to an old chrysalis which we have broken; they want us to resume a shape which we have outgrown."

Liberal internationalists noted also that the strongholds of Populism were also strongholds of isolationism. And yet not all liberals agreed with the revisionist image of the populists as reactionaries or even proto-fascists; C. Vann Woodward defended the Populists in the 1950s, as would Lawrence Goodwyn in the 1970s. Still, as the right made anti-elitist rhetoric central to its appeal, mainstream liberals became increasingly elitist and technocratic, finding a hero not in Lyndon Johnson, who combined the earthiness of Truman with the ideals of FDR, but in Adlai Stevenson, an aloof intellectual, and later in the extremely unlumpen John F. Kennedy.

The anti-elitism of the New Left in the '60s was directed, primarily, against the liberal elite. Kazin quotes the president of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1965: "The original commitment in Vietnam was made by President Truman, a mainstream liberal. It was seconded by President Eisenhower, a moderate liberal. It was intensified by the late President Kennedy, a flaming liberal." The fact that working-class Americans tended to support the war

Reprise

Today I've pieced together bits
of what our life was like before:
books, of course, and too much wine, fits

of work becoming, well, plain fits
(married license all the more
unlicensing), our bodies fitting

hip to hip
that one-word epithalamion *More*,
and the whole world candlelit.

Sex and books and drugs and sex, the blitz
was for years Romantically underscored:
we were Shelley, not his wives (pitched

into child-tending and politics
—at times, it seemed, twin chores—
no matter what *they* thought of it).

We—He—strode the beach in mad What Ifs,
Carmel, Laguna, Ocean Beach becoming more
Italian with each downward shift

until that final bit,
the adamantine heart unscored
by flames, snatched by Byron from the pit

dug in the sand to bury It,
—an It now, carcass, bloated, torn
by coral ropes and sand—Debt

paid too early and too dear. We skipped
the epilogue and came ashore.
Years ago. I only mention it

because we sometimes slip, or plan to slip,
in deja vu, a weekend torn
from what we love, our work and kids,

to see the Rolling Stones, to visit
our old selves once more
then happily, gratefully, call it quits.

LYNNE MCMAHON

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in Vietnam, and that antiwar protesters were frequently beaten up by working-class policemen and hardhats, gave campus leftists an excuse for their snobbish contempt toward wage-earning white Americans. The New Left sought allies not in the industrial workers whom the Marxists had lionized, but in a variety of marginalized minorities or pseudo-minorities: blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals, feminists.

The New Left failed to bring about revolution in America, but the followers of McCarthy (Eugene) and McGovern did revolutionize the Democratic Party. As the key alliance within the Democratic Party became a coalition of upper-middle-class white social liberals with black and Hispanic political activists, white working-class voters trickled out and began to augment the ranks of the Republican Party or the independent protest movements of George Wallace and Ross Perot. New Deal liberalism withstood the conservative populist assaults under McCarthy and Goldwater, only to succumb to Reagan and Gingrich—after being weakened by the '60s left. The New Left, Kazin writes, "only discredited the old order without laying the political foundation for a new one. That was the New Left's tragedy—and America's."

Beginning with Richard Nixon, Republicans have utilized George Wallace's pose as the champion of the little guy against the big interests while dropping his economic populism. (Wallace wanted to tax churches, foundations and universities to pay for expanded middle-class entitlements.) "Populists have always been liberal on economics," Lee Atwater wrote in a Reagan campaign memo in 1984. "So long as the crucial issues were generally confined to economics—as during the New Deal—the liberal candidate would expect to get most of the populist vote. But populists are conservatives on most social issues.... When social and cultural issues died down, the populists were left with no compelling reason to vote Republican." Flag-burning, gays in the military, unwed welfare mothers, affirmative action: all of these issues serve the purpose of diverting public attention from the sacrifice, by the Republican Party, of the economic interests of the middle and working classes to the interests of the wealthy few. The ploy is painfully obvious; and in campaign afer campaign, it works.

Kazin's final chapter is called "Populisms of Decline." In the 1990s, he notes, every faction was fighting for the populist label: "It became a convenient label for left, right, center, and anyone simply out to make a profit, a handy way to signify that one was on the side of the real people—those with more common sense than disposable income—and opposed to their elite enemies, whoever they might be." The ubiquity of rhetorical populism, he writes, was combined with "the virtual absence of an anticorporate perspective," as unions continued to decline and as "the Left, its most vocal and visible adherents still located on college campuses, was absorbed with issues of gender and racial identity."

Kazin does acknowledge the attempt by Democratic politicians and consultants to contest the right's identification of liberalism with "elites" and "special interests." "Clinton's campaign persona," he writes, "signified the climax of a voyage toward political realism that many left-wing and liberal activists began at the end of the 1960s." In 1986, the Democrats were able to win back the Senate in part by "class war" attacks on Republican economic policies benefiting the rich at the expense of the average American. "[Stanley] Greenberg, Robert Kuttner, Kevin Phillips and others argued that Democrats had become the majority party in the 1930s by offering to protect ordinary people from hardship and leaving their moral views and behavior alone." Though Kazin concedes that economic populism and economic nationalism "marked a tactical advance for the Democrats," he argues that "the entire strategy floated on air" because "there was now no dynamic social movement or mood of left insurgency forcing the Democrats' hand." As a result, "The Democrats' turn to populism, therefore, remained a strategy hatched by candidates and their consultants who sought an honorable and efficacious way to abandon the liberal label."

Even at its best, populism tends to avoid hard questions and to prefer simple answers. "Through populism," Kazin writes, "Americans have been able to protest social and economic inequalities without calling the entire system into question. Class barriers, according to the national creed, are not supposed to exist in the United States." As he points out, in language more reminiscent of Marxism than American populism, "Believing that mass democracy can topple any haughty foe means avoiding gloomy thoughts about entrenched structures of capital and the state." Those willing to think such gloomy thoughts may be populists in the sense that their aspirations are egalitarian, but from the populist tradition, to say nothing of the People's Party itself, they will have little or nothing to learn. •

TRB *continued from page 4*

of lowered tariffs on Mexican exports; you've nullified Mexico's main "comparative advantage." But no one's talking about that. Among the more radical aspirations of America's embattled labor movement is simply to guarantee, via trade agreements, the right of foreign workers to bargain collectively. Would any of the pseudo-populist House Republicans like to stand up at a union hall and explain what's so dangerously un-American about that?

Of course, even simple collective-bargaining guarantees would eventually raise wages and thus manufacturing costs in developing nations, blunting to *some* extent the effect of lowered trade barriers. But that's OK. Although freer trade boosts overall output for all nations involved, it obviously has narrow dislocating effects—on, for example, some low-skill American workers. Wanting to soften those effects is one thing that distinguishes liberals from conservatives; and international labor and environmental accords are vastly superior to alternative softeners, such as keeping tariffs high—or even raising them with the "social tariff" Pat Buchanan favors. Tariffs have a nasty way of provoking counter-tariffs.

The fast-track debate, should it ever make it onto the media's radar screen, would be a good opportunity for liberal soul-searching. Environmentalists, long ambivalent about free trade, should welcome new trade pacts as a vehicle for making environmental policy at the international level, where it often belongs; but they should also be more rigorous in deciding when it belongs there. And organized labor desperately needs to make its peace with freer trade—to spend less time fighting the inevitable and more time trying to shape it. If NAFTA had passed with a center-left coalition, rather than a center-right one, its labor accords might be appreciably stronger. And, as a bonus, American and Mexican labor would have forged stronger ties. Such a bond might eventually help them amend NAFTA's labor provisions to their further advantage. Given ongoing economic globalization, the only hope for American labor in the long run is for workers of the world to unite.

To the extent that House Republicans envision such a thing—a transnational labor movement decades from now raising labor standards around the world—their current position on fast-track reauthorization is a prescient expression of right-wing ideology. All the more reason for this boring-sounding issue to get more attention from liberals.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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CAPE COD DIARIST

Media moguls

LARRY TISCH CAN FEND FOR HIMself. He doesn't need a friend to do it for him. But news reports after he closed the deal selling CBS to Westinghouse—CNN is apparently another courter still in the wings—have been so near-uniformly tendentious and nasty that some people may wonder why the big media have been in such a snit. What they're saying to get the citizenry to join them in their resentments, of course, is that, with this transaction, Tisch has done much too well for Loews, the public corporation of which he is chairman and in which his family has a 30 percent stake. Loews bought 18 percent of CBS during 1985 and 1986, and with this summer-sale will have made a total pre-tax profit from the sale of $1 billion, a lot of money by anyone's reckoning. Still, it's only 14 percent a year on its investment, compounded annually, not an especially fat return if you consider that's about how the Dow rose during the same period, and much less than how some other indices performed.

IN ANY CASE, TISCH DIDN'T REALLY offend by how much money he made: the Cap Cities-ABC return on its television investment, now sold to Disney, was much more lucrative. Tisch really offended by behaving in his years at CBS as if that institution were not perfect. Remember this was the "Tiffany" network, no less, which he is said to have tarnished. I know a little bit about the television business. For six years I was a director of Boston's Channel 7, then the locally owned CBS affiliate. We faced staffs that were at once bloated and smug. Starting out with portentious ambitions about excellence, we routinely spent millions on junk programming—reruns of "Fantasy Island," for example—and millions more on mediocre management and mediocre instant airtime celebrities. Some of us tried to change these corporate habits. We failed, so I left.

FROM A MUCH STRONGER POSITION, to be sure, Tisch encountered at CBS a similarly complacent culture, only magnified by its beneficiaries' capacity to spin his efforts at reform as aggression. There was much talk about Edward R. Murrow, as if he hadn't been dead already thirty years, and even the First Amendment. In fact, when the big guns were out for Dan Rather, who cedes his independence to no fashion, the chairman backed the anchorman to the hilt. But Tisch did not succeed in breaking the stranglehold of the entrenched hierarchy who apparently believe that Mike Wallace, Don Hewitt and Andy Rooney are—and should be—cultural icons. My view is, we'd all be better off had Tisch won his grand face-off. One more point: Tisch has done many deals in the public markets. In none of them has he ever tried to buy in cheaper than the ordinary investor, and in none of them has he gotten out at a higher price. In this transaction, too, he held no special warrants and no golden parachute to make his landing cushier than anyone else's. Believe it or not, this scrupulousness makes him rare on Wall Street, and rare because for many of the heroes of the financial press such additional enrichments are what make or break a deal.

BY NOW, WE'VE HEARD from almost all the opinion elites about the enormity in Bosnia. A few people are for the Serbs. These include the Russia Firsters who will hold any position that makes Boris Yeltsin happy. Unhappily, there is a critical mass of these types in the State Department and the NSC. Others equivocate and take refuge in world-weary wisdom. Most informed and politically engaged Americans, however, want some sort of real U.S. tilt to the Muslims of Bosnia, and they have wanted this for almost three years. Their views are expressed in the legislation passed by Congress to lift the embargo, which works only to make those who have few arms to defend themselves have even less. Of course, President Clinton has vetoed this legislation, employing for only the second time this constitutional prerogative. How brave of him! But give him his due: he is consistent. His administration has never done anything to impede the Serbian genocide. Let's hope that Clinton's veto will be overturned when Congress returns from recess. And then it will have to confront already-pending legislation, mandating that we actually give Bosnia U.S. military aid. There are few mysteries about who will be "for" and who "against."

STILL, THERE HAS BEEN A CURIOUS silence during the long debate about Bosnia, and the silence comes from people who are not usually quiet. In fact, they are usually very noisily critical of U.S. foreign policy, and especially so when it is said to affect Muslims adversely. Edward Said has written whole books about how the U.S. doesn't care a fig about the Muslims. So why are he and his comrades—let's say, the editors of *The Nation*—so silent about the agony of these particular Muslims? There are, I believe, at least three reasons for this unaccustomed reticence. The first is that Bosnia's Muslims are European and, in Third World ideology, Europeans are never victims. The second is that Said and Co. are specialists, and their specialty is the Palestinian drama. If they focused even for a moment on the Bosnians, they would have to admit that, in the comparative context of history and of our own time, especially (saying nothing of the telling context of the neighboring Arab states), the Palestinian experience has been not tragic but humdrum. The third and most important reason is that Said and his fellow-travelers have constructed a world-in-their-heads in which villainy is always lodged in Washington. It is inconceivable to them that relief for any of the world's oppressed depends on the United States and its might. But it is so even in natural disasters. And it is certainly so in man-made calamities, like Haiti and Somalia, and for the Muslims of Bosnia, as well. Said's voice would have made no difference in this debate. But it is morally instructive that he never raised it.

CONTRAST THE SHYNESS OF SAID and other cutting edge left-wing firebrands on the fate of the Bosnian Muslims with the political behavior of American Jewry and its friends. With but two or three exceptions, all the press people whom Pat Buchanan termed Israel's "amen corner" during the Gulf crisis five years ago favor U.S. intervention for Bosnia. In Washington, the Holocaust Museum has held many special events, including exhibitions and symposia, and then actually suspended its ordinary operations for a few hours in symbolic solidarity with the Muslims of the Balkans, truly orphaned in the world. Co-sponsor with Senator Dole of the lift-the-embargo legislation was the only orthodox Jew in the Senate, Joe Lieberman, Democrat from Connecticut. And, when the votes were counted on the measure that was bitterly fought by his own party leadership, all of his fellow Jews, bar none, voted with him against the president's look-away policy. The vote in the House was not much different. Jews recognize a genocide when there is one. For these men and women, at least, "never again" compels not facile mouthings by Bill Clinton but action by the United States.

MARTIN PERETZ

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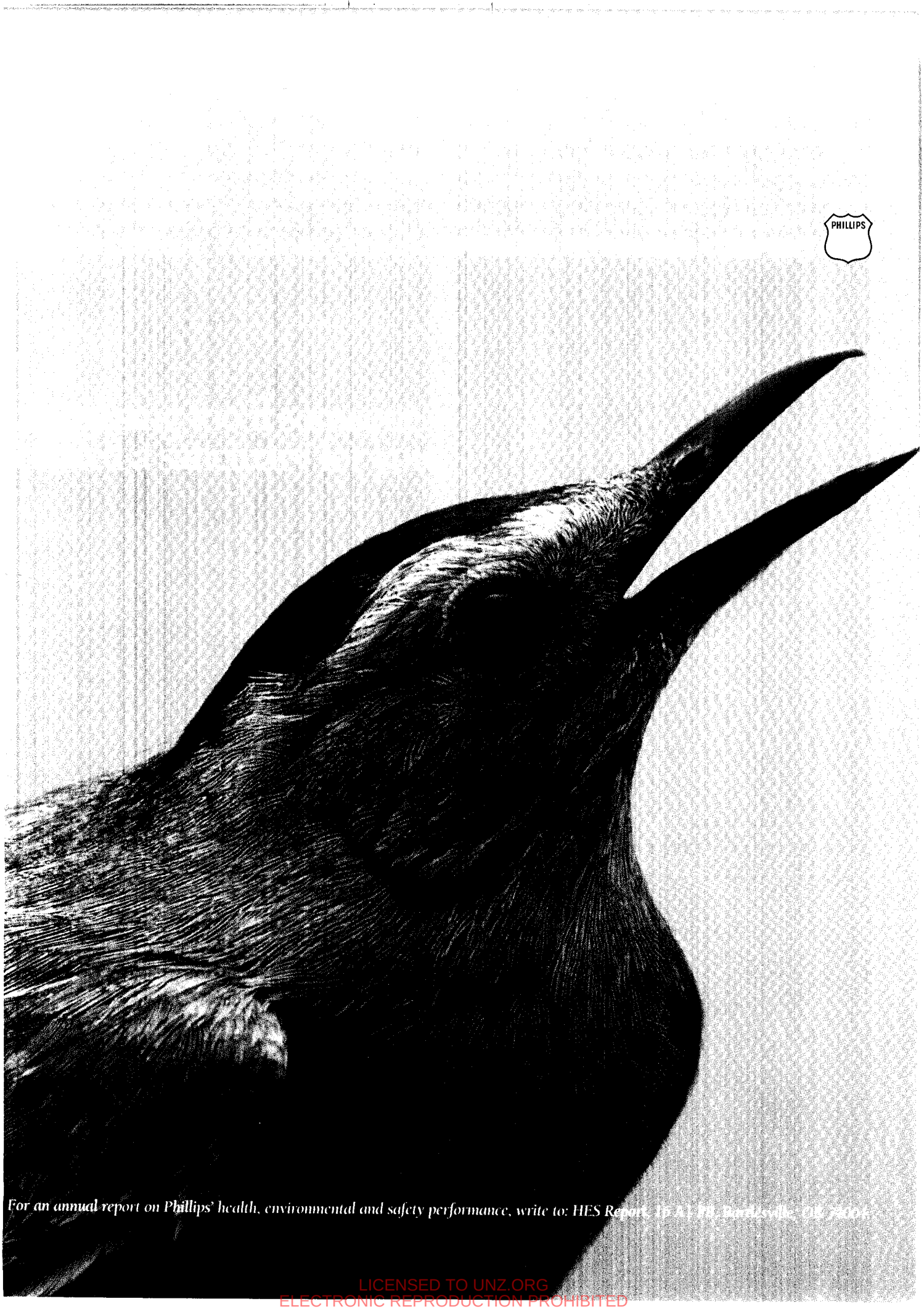
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In Tennessee, Britanny Johnson and her mother, Kathy, attend classes together through Families for Learning, a program sponsored by Toyota.

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